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THE LIFE OF GLADSTONE

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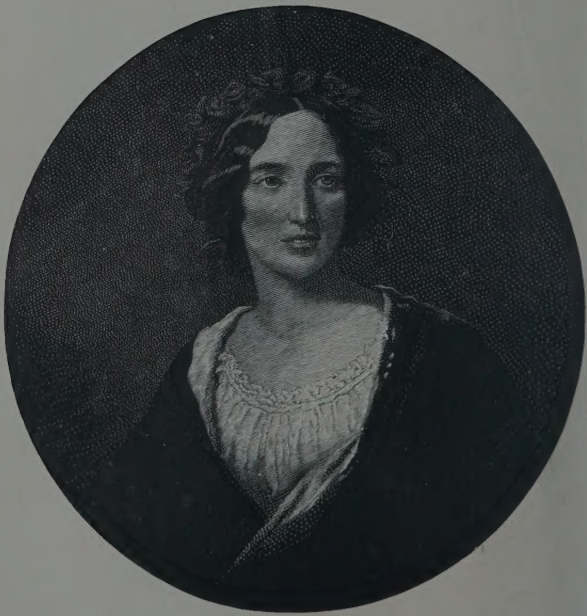

CATHERINE GLADSTONE

From a Painting

THE LIFE OF
WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

BY

JOHN MORLEY

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. II

(1872–1898)

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CHAPTER IX

WASHINGTON AND GENEVA

(*1870-1872*)

Although I may think the sentence was harsh in its extent, and unjust in its basis, I regard the fine imposed on this country as dust in the balance compared with the moral value of the example set when these two great nations of England and America—which are among the most fiery and the most jealous in the world with regard to anything that touches national honour—went in peace and concord before a judicial tribunal rather than resort to the arbitrament of the sword.—GLADSTONE.[1]

ONE morning in the summer of 1862 a small wooden sloop, screw and steam, of a little over a thousand tons register dropped slowly down the waters of the Mersey. The decks were rough and unfinished, but guests on board with bright costumes made a gay picture, flags were flying, and all wore the look of a holiday trial trip. After luncheon in the cabin, the scene suddenly changed. At a signal from the vessel a tug came alongside, the cheerful visitors to their surprise were quickly transferred, and the sloop made off upon her real business. She dropped anchor in a bay on the coast of Anglesey, where she took twenty or thirty men mostly English on board from a tug sent after her from Liverpool, with or without the knowledge of the officials. Thence she sailed to the Azores, where a steamer from London and a steamer from Liverpool brought officers, armaments, and coal. As soon as these were transhipped, the British ensign was hauled down, the Confederate flag run up, and the captain opened sealed orders directing him to sink, burn, or destroy, everything that flew the ensign of the so-called United States of America. These orders the captain of the rover faithfully executed, and in a few months the *Alabama*—for that was henceforth her memorable name—had done much to sweep the commercial marine of America from the ocean.

On the day on which she sailed (July 29), the government made up its mind that she should be detained, on the strength of affidavits that had been almost a week in their hands. The bird of prey had flown. The best definition of due diligence in these matters would seem to be, that it is the same diligence

[1] House of Commons, June 15, 1880.

and exactness as are exercised in proceedings relating to imposts of excise or customs. We may guess how different would have been the vigilance of the authorities if a great smuggling operation had been suspected. This lamentable proceeding, for which the want of alacrity and common sense at the foreign office and the bias or blundering of the customs agents at Liverpool may divide the grave discredit, opened a diplomatic campaign between England and the United States that lasted as long as the siege of Troy, and became an active element in the state of moral war that prevailed during that time between the two kindred communities. Mr. Gladstone, like other members of the Palmerston administration, held for several years that the escape of the *Alabama* was no wrong done by us. Lord Russell admitted (1863) that the cases of the *Alabama* and the *Oreto* were 'a scandal and in some degree a reproach to our laws,' though he stated in the same sentence that the cabinet thought the law sufficient where legal evidence also was sufficient. It was true that Britain is the greatest shipbuilding country in the world; that to interfere with ships or any other article of commerce is in so far to impose on a neutral some of the calamities of a belligerent; and that restriction of trade was no element in the policy and spirit of foreign enlistment acts either here or in America, which was the first country that by positive legislation sought to restrain its citizens within definite limits of neutrality. By a law of this kind parliament intended to forbid all subjects within its jurisdiction, to make war on people at peace with the British sovereign. It is only, in the words of Canning, when the elements of armament are combined, that they come within the purview of such law. This is not by way of controversy, but to define an issue. Chief justice Cockburn, an ardent champion of his country if ever there was one, pronounced in his judgment at Geneva, when the day for a verdict at length arrived, that the cruiser ought to have been detained a week before; that the officials of customs were misled by legal advice 'perhaps erroneous'; and that the right course to take was 'plain and unmistakable.' Even Lord Russell after many years of obdurate self-defence, at last confessed in manly words:—'I assent entirely to the opinion of the lord chief justice that the *Alabama* ought to have been detained during the four days I was waiting for the opinion of the law officers. But I think that the fault was not that of the commissioners of customs; it was my fault as secretary of state for foreign affairs.'[1]

Before the *Alabama* some ten vessels intended for confederate service had been detained, inquired into, and if released, released by order of a court for want of evidence. After the *Alabama*, no vessel on which the American minister had made representation to the foreign office succeeded in quitting a

[1] Walpole's *Russell*, ii. p. 373 n.

British port. But critical cases occurred. Emboldened by the successful escape of the *Alabama*, the Confederate agents placed two ironclad rams upon the stocks at the Birkenhead shipyard; Mr. Adams, the American minister in London, renewed his bombardment of the foreign office with proof of their object and design; the foreign office repeated its perplexed pleas against interference, made still more difficult by a colourable transfer of the rams to a French owner; and the whole dreary tragi-comedy of the *Alabama* seemed likely to be acted over again. By the autumn of 1863 the rams were ready to take the water, and the builders were again talking of a trial trip. This time Lord Russell gave orders that the rams were to be stopped (Sept. 3). He felt the mortification of an honourable man at the trick, of which he had allowed himself to be made the dupe in the case of the *Alabama*. Perhaps also he had been impressed by language used by Mr. Adams to a member of the cabinet, and more formally to himself, to the effect that the departure of the rams would mean the practical opening to the Southern confederates of full liberty to use this country as a base for hostile expeditions against the North. 'This,' said Mr. Adams, 'is war.'[1]

The affair of the rams was followed by Mr. Gladstone with absorbed attention. He confessed to the Duke of Argyll (Sept. 30, 1863) that he could not get the ironclads out of his head, and his letter shows with what exhaustive closeness he argued the case. The predicament was exactly fitted to draw out some of his most characteristic qualities—minute precision, infinite acuteness, infinite caution, the faculty of multiplied distinction upon distinction, an eye for the shadows of a shade. The points are no longer of living interest, but they exhibit a side of him that is less visible in his broader performances of parliament or platform.

As might have been expected, Mr. Adams was instructed to solicit redress for the doings of the *Alabama*. Lord Russell (Dec. 19, 1862), declaring that government had used every effort to stop her, refused to admit that we were under any obligation whatever to make compensation. Two years later (Aug. 30, 1865) he still declined both compensation and a proposal for arbitration. This opened a long struggle of extreme interest in the ministerial life of Mr. Gladstone, and, what was more, in the history of civilised nations. It was arbitration upon these issues that now began to divide politicians both inside the cabinet and outside, just as mediation and recognition had divided them in the earlier stages of the American conflict.

In 1863 Mr. Adams was the first to point to what after a long struggle became the solution of these difficulties, by assuring Lord Russell that there was 'no fair and equitable form of conventional arbitrament or reference' to which

[1] See *Rhodes*, iv. pp. 377-86

America would not be willing to submit. In 1865 (Sept. 2) Mr. Gladstone wrote a letter to Lord Russell, the reply to which has already been published.[1] Always jealous for cabinet authority, he began by submitting to Lord Russell that he had no idea that a despatch refusing arbitration was to be written, without a cabinet being held upon a subject so important. As it was, they had not disposed of the question or even discussed it. On the merits, he inclined to believe that the demand for arbitration was highly unreasonable; still though not disposed to say 'Yes' to the demand, he doubted 'No.' The proper course would be to lead the Americans to bring out the whole of their case, so that the cabinet might have all the pleas before them previously to coming to 'a decision of great delicacy and moment.'

Lord Russell stood to his guns. 'The question,' he said, 'has been the principal object of my thoughts for the last two years, and I confess I think that paying twenty millions down would be far preferable to submitting the case to arbitration.' England would be disgraced for ever if a foreign government were left to arbitrate whether an English secretary of state had been diligent or negligent in his duties, and whether an English law officer was partial and prejudiced in giving his opinion of English law. There the matter stood, and the moral war smouldered on.

II.

In 1870, the time arrived when Mr. Gladstone himself, no longer a minister third in standing in a Palmerston government, was called upon to deal with this great issue as a principal in his own administration. In 1868 the conservative government had agreed to a convention, by which a mixed commission, British and American, sitting in London should decide upon the settlement of all claims by the subjects of either country upon the other; and in respect of what were known generically as the *Alabama* Claims, proposing to refer these to the arbitration of the head of some friendly state, in case the mixed commission should not agree. The idea of a composite court or tribunal, as distinguished from a single sovereign arbitrator, had not yet risen above the horizon. Before this project ripened, Mr. Disraeli was out of government, Lord Clarendon had taken Lord Stanley's place at the foreign office, and the convention, with some modifications, was signed by him (Jan. 14, 1869) and in due course despatched to Washington. There the Senate, not on the merits but for party and personal reasons, refused to ratify. Though this attempt failed, neither of the two English political parties was in a position any longer to refuse arbitration in principle.

Agreement in principle is of little avail, without driving

[1] Walpole's *Russell*, ii. p. 370.

force enough for practice. The driving force was found mainly from a gradual change in English sentiment, though the difficulties with Russia also counted for something. Even so early as 1863 the tide of popular opinion in England had begun slowly to swell in favour of the northern cause. In 1866 victory across the Atlantic was decided, the union was saved, and slavery was gone. A desire to remove causes of difference between ourselves and the United States grew at a remarkable speed, for the spectacle of success is wont to have magical effects even in minds that would indignantly reject the standards of Machiavel. While benevolent feeling gained volume in this country, statesmen in America took ground that made the satisfaction of it harder. They began to base their claim for reparation on the original proclamation of British neutrality when the American conflict began. First made in 1866, this new pretension was repeated in despatches of 1867, and in 1869 the American secretary formally recorded the complaint that the Southern insurrection obtained its enduring vitality by resources drawn from England, and as a consequence of England's imperfect discharge of her duties as neutral. England became, they said, the arsenal, the navy-yard, and the treasury of the insurgent confederacy.

In the discussion of the Clarendon convention of 1869 Mr. Sumner—a man of some great qualities, but too often the slave of words where he thought himself their master—made an extravagant speech against the British government in the Senate, assessing the claim of the United States upon this country on principles that would have raised it to the modest figure of some four hundred million pounds sterling due from us to them, or, as Mr. Gladstone himself estimated it, to sixteen hundred millions. It does not matter which. This was only a violent and fantastic exaggeration of an idea of constructive claims for indirect damages that lay slumbering, but by no means extinct, in American minds, until, as we shall see, in 1872 it very nearly led to a disastrous explosion. This idea first found distinct and official utterance in the despatch of 1869. Besides compensating individuals for depredations, we were to pay for the cost to America of chasing the cruisers; for the transfer of most of the American commercial marine to the British flag; for enhanced insurance; and generally for the increased difficulty of putting down the rebellion.

All through 1870 a rather troublesome exchange of letters went on between Washington and the foreign office, and Mr. Gladstone took an active concern in it. 'I grieve to trouble you with so much manuscript,' Lord Clarendon writes to him on one occasion (Mar. 17, 1870), 'but I don't venture singlehanded to conduct a correspondence with the United States. . . . All this correspondence can do nothing but harm, and I have made my answer as short as is consistent with

courtesy. I should like to send it on Saturday, but if you have not time to look at it, or think it ought to be seen by the cabinet, I could make an excuse for the delay to Motley.' All this was in entire conformity to Mr. Gladstone's enduring conception of the right relations between a prime minister and the foreign secretary. We need not follow details, but one must not be omitted. In 1868 a royal commission recommended various material changes in the Foreign Enlistment Act, and in 1870 accordingly a new law was passed, greatly strengthening the hands of the executive, and furnishing due means of self-protection against such nefarious manœuvres as those of the *Alabama*.[1] By this Act, among other things, it was made an offence to build a ship with reasonable cause to believe that it would be employed in the service of a foreign state at war with a friendly state.

As the year 1870 went on, the expediency of an accommodation with America strengthened in Mr. Gladstone's mind. One member of the cabinet pointed out to the foreign secretary that if there was any chance of a war with Russia about the Black Sea, it would be as well to get causes of differences with America out of the way; otherwise, however unprepared the United States might be at the moment, we should undoubtedly have them on our hands sooner or later.[2] With Mr. Gladstone the desire was not a consequence of the possible troubles with Russia. His view was wider and less specific. He was alive to the extent to which England's power in Europe was reduced by the smothered quarrel with America, but he took even higher ground than this in his sense of the blessing to the world of an absolute reconciliation in good faith between the old England and the new. At first the government proposed (Nov. 28, 1870) to send over Sir John Rose to America. He was one of the many Scots who have carried the British flag in its best colours over the face of the globe; his qualities had raised him to great prominence in Canada; he had enjoyed good opportunities of measuring the American ground; he was shrewd, wise, well read in the ways of men and the book of the world, and he had besides the virtue of being pleasant. Rose himself did not formally undertake the mission, but he applied himself with diligence and success to bring the American government to the project of a joint high commission to examine and consider a situation that there was a common desire to terminate.

On Feb. 1, 1871, Mr. Gladstone was able to report to the Queen the arrival of news that the government of the United States were willing to concur in a commission for the discussion of international questions at present depending, without a

1 Sir William Harcourt called the Act 'the best and most complete law for the enforcement of neutrality in any country.' See *Hansard*, Aug. 1, 3, 4, 1870.

2 *Life of Cobden*, i. p. 418.

previous understanding that liability in respect of the *Alabama* was to be acknowledged by this country. The cabinet naturally thought that on this they might close, and they at once considered the composition of the commission and the proper instructions. Lord de Grey consented to be its president. Lord Derby, on being invited to join the commission, was very grateful for the compliment but declined, being of opinion that firmness and not concession to the Americans was what was wanted. Sir George Grey declined; so did Lord Halifax. 'I asked Northcote,' Lord Granville reports to Mr. Gladstone, 'his eyes twinkled through his spectacles. But he said he must ask Lady Northcote, and requested permission to consult Dizzy. The former consented, ditto Dizzy, which looks well.' So the commission was made up of Lord de Grey as the head of it, Northcote, Thornton (the British minister at Washington), Sir John Macdonald, as the representative of Canada, and Mr. Mountague Bernard, a theoretic jurist, who had written a book upon our neutrality the year before.[1]

III

The personal relations of Lord de Grey and his brethren with their American colleagues were excellent. They worked hard all day, and enjoyed Washington hospitality in its full strength every night. In business, Mr. Fish occasionally advanced or supported contentions thought by the Englishmen to be almost amusing. For instance, Mr. Sumner in a memorandum (Jan. 17, 1871) to Mr. Fish, had submitted a singular species of political syllogism. He desired nothing so much, he said, as that entire goodwill should prevail between Great Britain and the United States, and that the settlement should be complete. Now the greatest trouble and peril in the way of a complete settlement was Fenianism; Fenianism was excited by the proximity of the British flag over the Canadian border; therefore, the British flag should be withdrawn from the whole hemisphere, including the islands, and the American flag should fly in its stead. In conformity with this tight and simple chain of reasoning, Mr. Fish threw out a hint to Lord de Grey that the cession of Canada might end the quarrel. The English envoy contented himself with the dry remark that he did not find such a suggestion in his instructions.[2]

[1] *A Historical Account of the Neutrality of Great Britain during the American Civil War.* 1870.

[2] Franklin, in the negotiations on the recognition of the independence of the American colonies in 1782, had made the same suggestion of the cession of Canada by way of reparation and indemnification to the colonists for losses suffered by them in their rebellion, and Lord Shelburne was as deaf in 1782 as Lord de Grey in 1871. At an inaugural dinner of what was then called the Colonial Society (March 10, 1869), Mr. Johnson, then American minister, made some semi-facetious remarks about colonies finding themselves transferred from the union jack to the stars and stripes. Lord Granville said he was rather afraid that the minister of the great republic, who had spoken with such singular eloquence, would feel it was a little want of sense on

Though sometimes amused, the commissioners soon understood that at heart the American negotiators desired to settle. Difficulties with their own people were great. A presidential campaign with all its necessities approached. A settlement of outstanding accounts with England might be a good card to play in the election; on the other hand, if the peace card were not available, it was just possible that a war card might do nearly as well. Mr. Fish was mortally afraid of Sumner, who had been chairman of the foreign relations committee in the senate, and whose anti-English temper, as we have seen, was red-hot. The constitutional requirement of a two-thirds majority in the senate for the ratification of a treaty was awkward and menacing, and it was necessary to secure dubious senators by the exhibition of high national temper on the public stage. It is interesting to note, in passing, that the English visitors were persuaded how much better it would have been if, according to our own parliamentary system at Westminster, the American system had allowed Mr. Fish to meet Mr. Sumner on the floor of congress, and instead of seeking victory by unseen manipulation, fight the battle out before the country.

The British commissioners were almost as much embarrassed by their friends at home as by their friends or foes at Washington. Both ministers and lawyers, from the safe distance of Downing Street, were sometimes excessive in pressing small and trivial alterations, which the Americans after the diplomatist's manner insisted on treating as if they were not small but great. The sharp corner in the London cabinet was the more serious proposal, that certain rules as to the duty of neutrals should be laid down, and should be made guiding principles for the arbitrators, although the rules themselves had not been formally established when England's alleged breaches of neutral obligation had been committed. This retro-active or *ex-post-facto* quality, when the cabinet considered it (March 18), gave trouble, and it was used by passionate and impolitic persons to tarnish the whole policy in this country. Much heat was evoked, for a cabinet of many talents is not always the same thing as a cabinet of plain minds. One clever man objected at large to the commission, to concession, to obtaining any principle of settlement for future contingencies. A second was violent against all such arbitration as this, and thought they had much better pay up at once and have done with it. A third clever man even let fall some high words about 'national dishonour.' Granville, Argyll, Forster (the last described by a colleague as 'a tower of strength'), were steadfast and unfaltering for conciliation. Mr. Gladstone agreed,

his part, that made him unprepared at that moment to open negotiations for the cession of British Canada. Mr. Gladstone, who was present, referred to the days when he had been at the colonial office, when in every British colony there was a party, called 'the British party,' which, he rejoiced to think, had since become totally extinct.

but eager though he was for a settlement, he 'agreed with reluctance.' Sir Roundell Palmer had now great influence with him, and Palmer had come round to the conclusion that the risk from translating retrospectively into the form of a hypothetical international convention, not existing when the events happened, a duty that we had recognised as incumbent on us under our own law, might be safely run.[1] In plain English, the adverse way of describing this peculiar substitute for a free and open arbitration, was that Great Britain owed the Americans nothing, and if she had not consented to accept a set of new-fangled rules, and to be judged retro-actively by them, she could not possibly have been made to pay anything. To this the short answer was that though the rules might or might not be new-fangled as principles of international law, yet they were not new as principles of English municipal law, which, as construed by the British government itself, was coincident in substance with those rules. Was it in fact reasonable to contend that ironclads might be built in the Mersey, sent out a few miles beyond the river mouth, there armed from lighters, and sent off to bombard New York? If not, was it reasonable that England should invite the arbitrators to judge the *Alabama* case according to one rule in the past, and then to lay down another rule for the future?

A minor objection raised by Mr. Gladstone gave much alarm to his commissioners, and it is too characteristic to be omitted. Speaking of the ardently desired treaty, he writes to Lord Granville (April 12, 1871):—

> With regard to the preamble, it designates the late war in America as 'the rebellion.' I do not think it is right for us now to adopt a mode of speech different from that which we maintained throughout the struggle. Further, it tends to discredit our recognition of belligerency. And if we declare it a rebellion, we have given an example available to be quoted hereafter for the dealings of a foreign power with rebels as belligerents. If, on the other hand, the Americans object to speaking of the 'civil war,' it is quite easy (so I think) to leave out the words 'during the recent rebellion in the U.S.' altogether, and to say in the years 186 —or even to begin 'Whereas H.B.M.' perhaps inserting after 'U.S.' 'in respect of such depredations.'

This is an instance of the tenacity with which he sometimes held his ground after its relations and bearings had entirely changed. Something too may doubtless be set down to the lingering remains of his old feeling, of the strength of the constitutional argument of the South that sovereign states had a right to withdraw from the union if they pleased. If the proposal to drop the word 'rebellion' had been brought without warning or preparation before the full commission, assent would have been hopeless, but by the discretion of informal interviews, the matter was canvassed beforehand, the obnoxious word was

[1] Selborne, *Personal and Political Memorials*, i. p. 214.

silently left out, Mr. Gladstone's point was gained, and things went prosperously forward. 'I am quite sure,' wrote Sir Stafford Northcote to Mr. Gladstone (March 17), 'that there was no other way in which you could have hoped to settle these questions than by such a commission as ours. . . . What may be our fate I do not presume to guess, but if we succeed, it will be mainly due to de Grey's excellent sense, tact, and temper.' In the end, notwithstanding the power of the senate over treaties, the want of control by the American government over its party, and the exigencies of Canada, all at last fell into decent shape, and the substantial objects in view were effectively maintained. Canadian fishery questions were adjusted, and the boundary of San Juan remitted to the arbitration of the newly made German Emperor.

After thirty-seven sittings, spread over a period of two months, the treaty was signed on May 8, in a room decorated with flowers, with the good omen of brilliant sunshine, and everybody in such good humour that the American secretary of the commission tossed up with Lord Tenterden which should sign first,—the Englishman happily winning. The treaty began by the declaration that her Britannic Majesty authorised the commissioners to express in a friendly spirit the regret felt by her Majesty's government for the escape, under whatever circumstances, of the *Alabama* and other vessels from British ports, and for the depredations committed by these vessels. It embraced a definition of the rules of maritime neutrality, which some legal text-writers have applauded, and other legal text-writers have therefore condemned. Finally, and most important of all, whether we look at the immediate purpose or at its contribution to a great though slow-moving cause, the treaty of Washington secured a judgment by the arbitration of a tribunal, of all claims growing out of acts committed by the cruisers, and generically known as the *Alabama* Claims.' The tribunal was to consist of five members named by Great Britain, the United States, Switzerland, Italy and Brazil.

The effect of the rules of Washington as applied at Geneva remains, as I have said, a topic of controversy. Maine, for example, while admitting that the result for the occasion was good, holds that by making the rule of neutral duty more severe, it marked reaction rather than progress in the general drift of international law.[1] Others maintain that the amended foreign enlistment Act of 1870, which is in fact a partial incorporation of the Washington rules, went far beyond what international law requires, and made a new crime out of an act, namely the building of a ship, which is not forbidden either by the law of nations or by other municipal laws.[2]

[illegible]

[1] *International Law*, p. 240. On the doubtful value of the rules, see Lawrence's *Principles of International Law* (1895), pp. 553-4.

[2] Boyd, third Eng. edition of *Wheaton* (1889), p. 503.

IV

Once, after some crowning mercy in the war, President Lincoln said to his cabinet, 'Now, gentlemen, we have got our harpoon into the monster, but we must still take uncommon care, or else by a single flop of his tail he will send us into all eternity.' This wholesome caution, too often overlooked by headlong politicians, was suddenly found to be much needed at the eleventh hour of the treaty of Washington. At the end of 1871, Mr. Gladstone experienced a severe shock, for he found that the case put in by America for the arbitrators insisted upon an adjudication by them not only upon the losses suffered by individual American citizens, but upon the indirect, constructive, consequential and national claims first propounded in their full dimensions by Mr. Sumner. A storm at once arose in England, and nobody was more incensed than the prime minister. In reporting to the Queen, he used language of extreme vehemence, and in the House of Commons (Feb. 9, 1872) when Mr. Disraeli spoke of the indirect claims as preposterous and wild, as nothing less than the exacting of tribute from a conquered people, Mr. Gladstone declared that such words were in truth rather under the mark than an exaggeration, and went on to say that 'we must be insane to accede to demands which no nation with a spark of honour or spirit left could submit to even at the point of death.' Speaking of the construction put upon the treaty by the government, he declared such a construction to be 'the true and unambiguous meaning of the words, and therefore the only meaning admissible, whether tried by grammar, by reason, by policy, or by any other standard.' Some persons argued that this was to accuse the Americans of dishonesty. 'I learn really for the first time,' exclaimed Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville (Feb. 8), 'that a man who affirms that in his opinion a document is unambiguous in his favour, thereby affirms that one who reads it otherwise is dishonest.' His critics retorted that surely a construction that could not stand the test of grammar, of reason, of policy, or any other test, must be due either to insanity or to dishonesty; and as we could hardly assume General Grant, Mr. Fish, and the others to be out of their wits, there was nothing for it but dishonesty.

For five anxious months the contest lasted. The difficulties were those of time and form, often worse than those of matter and substance. Nor would this have been the first case in which small points hinder the settlement of great questions. The manner of proceeding, as Mr. Gladstone reports to the Queen, was of such complication that hours were given almost every day for many weeks, to the consideration of matter which on the day following was found to have moved out of view. Suggestions came from Washington, mostly inadmissible, whether

their faults were due to accident and haste or to design. Sometimes refusals of this suggestion or that from our side were couched in 'terms of scant courtesy and bordering upon harshness.' Still the cabinet persisted in husbanding every chance of saving the treaty. They charitably judged the attitude of the Washington government, in Mr. Gladstone's ample language, 'to be directed by considerations belonging to the sphere of its own domestic policy, and to the contentions of party in that sphere. But they will attempt by patient consideration, avoidance of self-laudation and of irritating topics, and a steady endeavour to be right, to attain the great end in view of an honourable settlement which it would be a sad disgrace as well as misfortune to both countries now to miss.' And here occurs a consideration as we pass, upon the American constitution. 'The fact remains indisputable (June 1) that there is no conclusive evidence of any serious subject the substance of which is at present in dispute between the two governments, but the difficulties arising on the American side from what may be termed electioneering considerations are greatly aggravated by the position of the American senate and the reference to that body for previous counsel, for which it seems to be miserably unsuited, as it takes days and almost weeks for debate, where a cabinet would require only hours.'

The opposition in parliament was patriotic, and as a rule made no difficulties. 'Mr. Disraeli,' reports Mr. Gladstone (June 3), 'behaved with the caution and moderation which have generally marked his conduct with regard to the Washington treaty. . . . On the whole the House of Commons showed the same dignified self-command for which it has been remarkable during the whole period since the opening of the session with reference to this question; although the more inflammatory expressions, which fell from a few members, were warmly cheered by a portion, and a portion only, of the opposition.'

The cabinet was unanimous against the submission of the indirect claims, but there were marked differences of leaning, as in fact there had been throughout. All accepted Lord Ripon's[1] view that if he had insisted on getting into the treaty nothing less than a formal and express repudiation of the indirect claims, no treaty at all would have been possible. Both sides in the Washington conferences had been more anxious to submit to the arbitrators the principle of allowing indirect claims, than to embark on any discussion of them. The American commissioners knew this principle to be unsound, but knowing also that their own people expected the claims to be referred, they could only abstain from insisting on their inclusion. The British commissioners were willing silently to waive an express renunciation of them, being confident that the terms of the

[1] Lord de Grey had been created Marquis of Ripon after the signature of the treaty of Washington.

protocols and the language of the treaty would be so construed by the arbitrators as to exclude the indirect claims.[1] All this was a rational and truly diplomatic temper on both sides; but then the immortal events of a hundred years before had shown too plainly that Englishmen at home cannot always be trusted to keep a rational and diplomatic temper; and many events in the interval had shown that English colonists, even when transfigured into American citizens, were still chips of the old block. The cabinet agreed that a virtual waiver of the claims was to be found both in the protocols of the conference and in the language of the treaty. Lord Ripon and Mr. Forster, however, thought it would be safe to go on at Geneva, in the assurance that the arbitrators would be certain to rule the indirect claims out. At the other extreme of the cabinet scale, the view was urged that England should not go on, unless she put upon record a formal declaration that she did not, and never would, assent to any adjudication upon the indirect claims. To a certain minister who pressed for some declaration in this sense, —also formulated in a motion by Lord Russell in parliament, himself responsible for so much of the original mischief[2]—Mr. Gladstone wrote as follows:—

June 17.— . . . I doubt whether the cabinet can legitimately be asked, as a cabinet, to make these affirmations, inasmuch as, according to my view, they are not within the purview of its present undertaking—that undertaking has reference exclusively to the scope of the arbitration. We have contended all along that the claims would not legitimately come before the arbitrators. . . . But we had never demanded the assent of the Americans to our reasoning, only to our conclusion that the claims were not within the scope of the arbitration. It is my view (but this is quite another matter) that they lie cast aside, a dishonoured carcass, which no amount of force, fraud, or folly can again galvanise into life. You will see then, in sum, that (if I rightly understand you) I accept for myself broadly and freely what may be called the extreme doctrine *about* the indirect claims; but I think the cabinet cannot fairly be challenged for an official judgment on a matter really not before it.

The little entries in the diary give us a good idea of the pressure on the prime minister:—

Feb. 6, 1872.—Spoke an hour after Disraeli on the address. . . . The *Alabama* and Washington question lay heavy on me till the evening. Even during the speech I was disquieted, and had to converse with my colleagues. *March* 16.—Cabinet 2¾-7; laborious chiefly on the Washington treaty. 17*th*.—Worked on part of the despatch for America. 18*th*.—In

[1] See Moore, *History and Digest of International Arbitration to which the United States have been a Party*, Washington, 1898, i. pp. 629-37.

[2] Mr. Bruce writes home from the cabinet room:—'June 5, 1872: You must read the House of Lords debate on the Alabama treaty. It was a most mischievous move of Lord Russell, as the discussion must weaken our last chance—not a bad one—of settling differences. The debate was adjourned. But there is no doubt that a vote will be carried which, if it were in the House of Commons, would lead to resignation. We cannot of course treat the vote of the Lords, where we are always in a minority, as of the same quality. But it will be misunderstood in America. We are now in the cabinet discussing the next steps.' The motion was withdrawn.

conclave. Much heavy work on *Alabama*. 22*nd*.—Severe bronchial attack. Transacted business through West, W. H. G. [his son], Mr. Glyn, Lord Granville and Cardwell, who went to and fro between the cabinet below-stairs and me. To all of them I whispered with some difficulty. *April* 5.—Conclave on countercase. First with Cardwell and Lowe, then with Tenterden and Sanderson. Much confusion. *May* 12.—Saw Lord Granville, who brought good news from America. 27*th*.—U.S. question bristles with difficulties. 30*th*.—H. of C. During the evening two long conferences on Washington treaty with Lord G. and the lawyers, and a cabinet 10-1. Worked Uniformity bill through committee at intervals. *June* 3.—Cabinet 3-4¼. H. of C. Made a statement on the treaty of Washington. The House behaved *well*. Also got the Act of Uniformity bill read a third time. Its preamble is really a notable fact in 1872. 6*th*.—H. of C. Spoke on Washington treaty and Scots Education—the House *too* well pleased as to the former. 11*th*.—The cabinet met at 2, and sat intermittently with the House to 5¾, again 9½-1.

The arbitrators were to meet on June 15. Yet no break in the clouds seemed likely. Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues had a meeting at the foreign office, and did not separate until after midnight on June 11. The British agent was to be directed to apply for an immediate adjournment, and without lodging the summary of our case as provided by the treaty. If the arbitrators declined to adjourn, either because the Americans objected, or from a belief that they had no title to adjourn without a formal opening of business by lodging summaries, then was or was not our agent to change tack and lodge his summary? Or was the arbitration, and with the arbitration the whole treaty, to fall to the ground for want of it? On this question Mr. Gladstone thought it his duty to mention to the Queen that it had not yet (June 13) been found possible to bring the cabinet to a decision. For a day or two it looked as if the ministry might fall to pieces, but the head of it was indomitable:—

June 13 (Thursday).—Since Tuesday morning I have constantly revolved or discussed this proposition: that we should not be justified in breaking off the proceedings at Geneva (if an adjournment can be had after presentation of the summary), upon a refusal to present it. My determination upon it is now firmly rooted and tested by all the mental effort I can apply, and the time I thought had come to-day for looking forward as well as backward. I therefore wrote to the Queen in terms which might a little prepare her for difficulties in the cabinet. I saw Granville first, who had not reached my point, but seemed to come up to it; then arranged for him to see Halifax, Ripon to see Kimberley, and the chancellor [Lowe] to see Cardwell; as the *knot* of the probable difficulty is in these three. On the whole, I hope we shall, in one way or another, work through. *At any rate, if anything like a government can be held together, I will not shrink.*

June 15.—Cabinet 12-2¼, and with brief intervals to 7¼. Dined with Princess Louise. After dinner Granville and I went to see Mr. Hammond, then on to the F. O., where we got (before midnight) the protocol of to-

day from Geneva. Thank God that up to a certain point the indications on this great controversy are decidedly favourable.

June 16.—Sunday (Bunker Hill anniversary? [No—June 17]). Cabinet here 1½-3¾. We sent off a telegram, which I hope may finish the good work at Geneva.

What happened at Geneva was this. When the day came, the British agent did not lodge his summary, but asked for an adjournment for eight months, as the two governments did not agree upon the scope of the arbitration. This looked dark enough, and the treaty seemed doomed. It was saved by Mr. Adams, the American nominee on the tribunal. When he reached Geneva and learned how things stood, he decided that the knot which they could not untie must be cut.[1] His golden idea was this: the arbitrators should make a spontaneous declaration that on the principles of international law the indirect claims ought to be excluded from their consideration. Adams saw his colleagues one by one, and brought them round to his view. The English chief justice had made up his mind that the whole thing was dead, as he had for many months been loudly telling all London that it ought to be. But when asked by Mr. Adams whether the spontaneous extra-judicial declaration would remove all obstacles to progress, Cockburn answered that he thought it would. 'I said,' Mr. Adams continued, 'that in that event I was prepared to make a proposition. I should be assuming a heavy responsibility; but I should do so, not as an arbitrator representing my country, but as representing all nations.' So the indirect claims were summarily ruled out, and the arbitration proceeded. In some notes prepared for the cabinet on all these proceedings (Feb. 4, 1873), Lord Tenterden, the clever and experienced British agent at Geneva, writes, 'I cannot conclude this part of the memorandum without saying that the dignity, tact, self-command and moderation with which Mr. Adams discharged his functions as arbitrator, did honour to his country.'

In September (1872) the five arbitrators at Geneva gave their award. They were unanimous in finding Great Britain liable for the acts of the *Alabama*; all save the British representative found her liable for the *Florida*; the Italian, the Swiss, and the American against the Englishman and the Brazilian found her liable for the *Shenandoah* after leaving Melbourne. They awarded in satisfaction and final settlement of all claims, including interest, a gross sum of about three and a quarter million pounds sterling. The award, though hardly a surprise, still inflicted a lively twinge of mortification on the masterful and confident people of this island. Opinion was divided, but the decision was not one of those that cut deep or raise the public temperature to fever. The prints of the opposition insisted that the result was profoundly vexatious, it was a

1 *Charles Francis Adams.* By his Son. Boston, 1900, pp. 394-7.

bungled settlement, and the arguments used in favour of it were 'wild sentimental rubbish.' On the other hand, the *Times* regarded it with profound satisfaction, and ministerial writers with a lyric turn hailed it as a magnificent victory, though we had to pay a heavy bill. A little balm was extracted from the fact that the Americans had preferred before the tribunal a demand of nine millions and a half, and thus got little more than one-third of what they had asked. So ended what has been called the greatest of all arbitrations, extinguishing the embers that could not have been left to smoulder without constant peril of a vast and fratricidal conflagration. The treaty of Washington and the Geneva arbitration stand out as the most notable victory in the nineteenth century of the noble art of preventive diplomacy, and the most signal exhibition in their history of self-command in two of the three chief democratic powers of the western world. For the moment the result did something to impair the popularity of Mr. Gladstone's government, but his association with this high act of national policy is one of the things that give its brightest lustre to his fame.

CHAPTER X

AS HEAD OF A CABINET

(*1868–1874*)

Rational co-operation in politics would be at an end, if no two men might act together, until they had satisfied themselves that in no possible circumstances could they be divided.—GLADSTONE.

THE just complacency with which Mr. Gladstone regarded his cabinet on its first construction held good :—

I look back with great satisfaction on the internal working of the cabinet of 1868-74. It was a cabinet easily handled ; and yet it was the only one of my four cabinets in which there were members who were senior to myself (the lord chancellor Hatherley, Lord Clarendon), with many other men of long ministerial experience. When this cabinet was breaking up in 1874, I took the opportunity of thanking them for the manner in which they had uniformly lightened my task in the direction of business. In reply, Halifax, who might be considered as the senior in years and experience taken jointly, very handsomely said the duty of the cabinet had been made more easy by the considerate manner in which I had always treated them. Some of them were as colleagues absolutely delightful, from the manner in which their natural qualities blended with their consummate experience. I refer especially to Clarendon and Granville.

If we may trust some of those who were members of it, no cabinet ever did its business with livelier industry or effect. Under Mr. Gladstone's hand it was a really working cabinet, not an assemblage of departmental ministers, each minding his own affairs, available as casual members of this or the other sub-committee, and without an eye for the general drift and tendency of their proceedings. Of course ministers differed in importance. One was pleasant and popular, but not forcible. Another overflowed with knowledge and was really an able man, but somehow he carried no guns, and nobody cared what he said. One had aptitude without weight—perhaps the true definition of our grossly overworked epithet of clever. Another had weight and character, without much aptitude. The cabinet as a whole was one of extraordinary

power, not merely because its chief had both aptitude and momentum enough for a dozen, but because it was actively homogeneous in reforming spirit and purpose. This solidarity is the great element in such combinations, and the mainspring of all vigorous cabinet work.

Of Mr. Gladstone as head of his first cabinet, we have a glimpse from Mr. Stansfeld :—

Mr. Gladstone's conduct in the cabinet was very curious. When I first joined in 1871, I naturally thought that his position was so commanding, that he would be able to say, 'This is my policy; accept it or not as you like.' But he did not. He was always profuse in his expressions of respect for the cabinet. There was a wonderful combination in Mr. Gladstone of imperiousness and of deference. In the cabinet he would assume that he was nothing. I thought he should have said, 'This is my policy. What do you think of it?' and then have fought it out until they had come to an agreement. He always tried to lead them on by unconscious steps to his own conclusions.[1]

To this we may add some words of Lord Granville used in 1883, but doubtless just as true of 1868-74 :—

I have served under several prime ministers, men for whom I had high respect and to whom I had the greatest attachment, but I can say that I never knew one who showed a finer temper, a greater patience, or more consideration for his colleagues than Mr. Gladstone in all deliberations on any important subject. In his official position, with his knowledge, with his ability, and with the wonderful power of work that characterises him, he of course has an immense influence on the deliberations of the cabinet; but notwithstanding his tenacity of purpose and his earnestness, it is quite extraordinary how he attends to the arguments of all, and, except on any question of real vital principle, he is ready to yield his own opinion to the general sense of the colleagues over whom he presides.[2]

Imputing his own qualities to others, and always keen to make the best of people and not the worst, if he had once invited a man to office, he held on to him to the last possible moment. 'The next most serious thing to admitting a man into the cabinet,' he said, 'is to leave a man out who has once been in.' Not seldom he carried his invincible courtesy, deference, and toleration even beyond the domain where those qualities ought to be supreme. This was part of what men meant, when they said that life was to him in all its aspects an application of Christian teaching and example. To this we must add another consideration of first importance, and one that vulgar criticism of great statesmen too commonly ignores. In the words of Lord Aberdeen (1856), who knew from sharp experience how much his doctrine might cost a man :—'A prime minister is not a free agent. To break up a government, to renounce all the good you hoped to do and leave imperfect

[1] Sir James Stansfeld, *Review of Reviews*, xi. p. 519.
[2] *Pall Mall Gazette*, Dec. 14, 1883.

all the good you have done, to hand over power to persons whose objects or whose measures you disapprove, even merely to alienate and politically to injure your friends, is no slight matter.'[1]

A member of this first cabinet wrote to Mr. Gladstone long after it had come to an end:—'I suppose there was no one of your then colleagues less sympathetic with you, less in tune with your opinions and enthusiasms than Lowe. Nevertheless this happened to me with him—after you had resigned. Lowe opened to me one day, on the subject of your relations with your colleagues. He spoke in terms of warm admiration, and to my great surprise, ended by saying—"I have the same kind of feeling towards him that I can suppose must be the feeling of a dog for his master." Lowe is a perfectly sincere man. He would not have said this if he had not felt it.' 'In everything personal,' Mr. Gladstone replied, 'Lowe was an excellent colleague and member of cabinet. But I had never been in personal relations with him before, and at the outset of the ministry of 1868 I knew very little of him. Moreover, he was the occasion of much trouble to me by his incessant broils with ——, who was an awkward customer.' In sheer intellect Mr. Gladstone held that Lowe had not many equals, but in nobody else did he discover so many mixed and contradictory qualities—'splendid in attack, but most weak in defence, at times exhibiting pluck beyond measure, but at other times pusillanimity almost amounting to cowardice; one day headstrong and independent, and the next day helpless as a child to walk alone; capable of tearing anything to pieces, but of constructing nothing.'[2]

When Lord Clarendon died,—'An irreparable colleague,' Mr. Gladstone notes in his diary, 'a statesman of many gifts, a most lovable and genial man.' Elsewhere he commemorates his 'unswerving loyalty, his genial temper, his kindness ever overflowing in acts yet more than in words, his liberal and indulgent appreciation of others.' In the short government of 1865-6, Lord Granville had described Clarendon to Mr. Gladstone as 'excellent, communicating more freely with the cabinet and carrying out their policy more faithfully, than any foreign secretary I have known.' Mr. Gladstone himself told me twenty years after, that of the sixty men or so who had been his colleagues in cabinet, Clarendon was the very easiest and most attractive. It is curious to observe that, with the exception of Mr. Bright, he found his most congenial adherents rather among the patrician whigs than among the men labelled as advanced.

Mr. Bright, as we have seen, was forced by ill-health to quit the government. Thirty years of unsparing toil, more

[1] M. C. M. Simpson's *Many Memories*, pp. 232-3.
[2] Quoted in Sir E. W. Hamilton's *Monograph*, p. 124.

than ten of them devoted especially to the exhausting, but in his case most fruitful, labours of the platform, had for the time worn down his stock of that energy of mind, which in the more sinewy frame of the prime minister seemed as boundless as some great natural element. To Mrs. Bright Mr. Gladstone wrote :—

It is not merely a selfish interest that all his colleagues feel in him on account of his great powers, just fame, and political importance ; but it is one founded on the esteem and regard which, one and all, they entertain towards him. God grant that any anxieties you may entertain about him may soon be effectually relieved. I wish I felt quite certain that he is as good a patient as he is a colleague. But the chief object of my writing was to say that the Queen has signified both by letter and telegraph her lively interest in Mr. B.'s health ; and she will not forgive me unless I am able to send her frequent reports.

He is quite capable of dealing faithfully with colleagues breaking rules. To a member of the cabinet who had transgressed by absence from a division of life and death :—

I should not act frankly by you if I did not state it, without hesitation as a general and prospective proposition, that, without reference to the likelihood or unlikelihood of defeat, upon motions which must from their nature be votes of confidence, [there can] be but one rule for the members of the government, and that is to give the votes themselves which at the same time the government with less strong title is asking from the members of their party.

He scolds a leading minister pretty directly for placing him in a disagreeable and rather ludicrous position, by failing to give the proper information about a government bill containing an important change, so that nobody could explain the reason for it to the House. His own personal example of absolutely unremitting attendance on the scene of action, entitled him to rebuke slackness. Nothing escaped him. Here is the way in which he called defaulters to their duty :—

April 8, 1873.—The chancellor of the exchequer thinks he has some reason to complain of your having quitted London on Thursday, without any prior communication with him or Glyn, four days before the budget. I have heard with regret that the state of your health has compelled you to spend your vacation abroad ; but scarcely even a direct medical order, and certainly in my opinion nothing less, could render such an example innocent in its effects, as is set by a departure from London under such circumstances. Although it has been a great pleasure to me to admit and recognise your parliamentary services and distinctions, and though I have always thought your accession to the government an acquisition of great value, I must frankly avow my opinion that it is hardly possible for the chancellor of exchequer to discharge his duties without your constant and sedulous co-operation, or for the official corps in general to avoid suffering, if the members of it make themselves the judges of the question when and under what circumstances their absence may be permitted during the sittings of the House.

June 25, 1870.—I am led to suppose by your absence from the division yesterday, that there may not be a perfectly clear understanding between us as to the obligations of members of the government on these occasions. Yesterday gave occasion of much inconvenience on account of the entertainment at Windsor, but all the members of the government who could be expected to attend voted in the division, except yourself. I can say from my own recollection that as far as regards political officers, the sovereign always permits the claim of the House of Commons to prevail.

Changes among subordinate members of the government came early. Of one of these ministers Mr. Gladstone writes to Lord Granville (August 18, 1869): 'He has great talent, and is a most pertinacious worker, with a good deal of experience and widely dispersed knowledge of public affairs. But he seems to be somewhat angular, and better adapted for doing business within a defined province of his own, than in common stock or partnership with others.' Unfortunately the somewhat angular man shared his work with a chief who had intellectual angularities of his own, not very smoothly concealed. As it happened, there was another minister of secondary rank who did not come up to the expected mark. 'Though he has great talents, remarkable power of speech, and some special qualifications for his department, he has not succeeded in it with the House of Commons, and does not seem very thoroughly to understand pecuniary responsibility and the management of estimates, and there is no doubt whatever that in his department the present House of Commons will be vigilant and exacting, while the rapid growth of its expenditures certainly shows that it should be filled by some one capable of exercising control.' Not thoroughly 'to understand pecuniary responsibility' was counted a deadly sin in those halcyon days. So the transgressor accepted a diplomatic mission, and this made room to plant his angular colleague in what seemed a 'province of his own.' But few provinces are definite enough to be independent of the treasury, and the quarrels between this minister and the chancellor of the exchequer became something of a scandal and a weakness to the government. One of the fiercest battles of the time (1872) broke out in respect of Kew Gardens between the minister with a definite province of his own and a distinguished member of 'a scientific fraternity, which, valuable as it is,' has been unduly pampered of late from a variety of causes into a somewhat overweening idea of its own importance.' The premier's pacifying resources were taxed by this tremendous feud to the uttermost; he holds a stiffish tone to the minister, and tries balm for the *savant* by propitiatory reminder of 'a most interesting fact made known to me when I had the pleasure and advantage of seeing you at Kew, namely the possibility of saving for purposes of food a portion of the substance of the diseased potato. The rescue of a

sensible percentage of this valuable esculent will be a noble service rendered by scientific knowledge and skill to the general community.' But science is touchy, and wounds are sometimes too deep to be healed by words.

A point worth noting is his strict limitation of his own rights as head of a government. 'I hope you will not think,' he wrote to a colleague, 'I am evading my duties, but while it is my duty to deal with all difficulties arising between members of the government, it is wholly beyond my power, and in no way belongs to my province, to examine and settle the controversies which may arise between them and civil servants who are employed under them.' He is careful to distinguish his own words from the words of the cabinet; careful both to lean upon, and to defer to, the judgment of that body; and when the decision is taken, it is in their name that he writes to the vexatious colleague (July 24, 1872):—'The cabinet have come to their conclusion, and directed me to make it known to you. . . . If you think proper to make the announcement of these intentions of the government, they are quite willing that you should do so. If otherwise, Mr. Bruce will do it as home minister. Thus far as to making known what will be done. As to the doing of it, the rules will have to be cancelled at once by you.'

The reader of an authoritarian or arbitrary cast of mind may ask why he did not throw a handful of dust upon the angry combatants. 'It is easy,' he wrote to Cardwell (Nov. 20, 1871), 'to talk of uprooting X., but even if it were just, it will, as Glyn [the party whip] would tell you, be very difficult. But Y. perhaps proceeds more like Moloch, and X. in the manner of Belial. Why cannot they follow the good example of those worthies, who co-operated in pandemonium? If you thought you could manage Y., I would try to tackle X. I commend this subject to your meditations.' Sulphureous whiffs from this pandemonium were pretty copiously scented both by parliament and the public, and did the ministry some harm.

Of a peer of much renown in points of procedure, private business, and the like, he says, 'he looks at everything out of blinkers, and has no side lights.' Of one brilliant and able colleague in the first administration he writes, that 'he has some blank in his mental constitution, owing to which he receives admonitions most kindly, and then straightway does the same thing over again.' Of another colleague, 'though much nearer the rights of the case than many who were inclined to object, he is thin and poor in the cabinet.' Some one else is 'a sensitive man, given beyond most men to speak out his innermost and perhaps unformed thoughts, and thereby to put himself at a disadvantage.' Another public servant is 'not unmanageable, but he needs to be managed.' In the same letter he speaks of the Hibernian presbyterian as 'that peculiar cross between a Scotchman and an Irishman.'

Of his incessant toil the reader has already a good idea. Here are a few items. To one correspondent (Jan. 21, 1869) he writes :—'I hope you do not think my "holiday" at Hawarden has proved my idleness, for I think ten hours a day has been a moderate estimate of my work there on public business, to which some other matters have had to be added.' To the attorney-general he says when he has had three years more of it (Sept. 18, 1872) :—'I cannot say with you that my office never gives me a day without business, for in the four "vacations" so far as they have gone, I think I have had no less than five days. This vacation has thus far been the best ; but heavy and critical work impends.' In October, 1871, he writes to Mrs. Gladstone from Edinburgh :—'I have for *the first time* since the government was formed, had a holiday of two whole days.' To Lord Clarendon he writes from Lord Granville's at Walmer (Sept. 2, 1869) :—'At the end of a holiday morning of work, since I breakfasted at nine, which has lasted till near four, I have yet to say a few words about. . . .' To Archdeacon Harrison, May 25, 1873 :—'As you may like to have the exact anatomy of my holiday on the Queen's birthday, I will give it you : 2¼ A.M., return home from the H. of C. 10 A.M., two hours' work in my room. 2-7, the cabinet. Three-quarters of an hour's walk. 8-12, thirty-two to dinner and an evening party. 12, bed!' To Sir R. Phillimore, July 23, 1873 :—'Not once this year (except a day in bed) have I been absent from the hours of government business in the House, and the rigour of attendance is far greater now than at earlier periods of the session.'

His colleagues grudged his absence for a day. On one occasion, in accordance with a lifelong passion and rooted habit, he desired to attend a funeral, this time in Scotland, and Lord Granville's letter of remonstrance to him is interesting in more points than one ; it shows the exacting position in which the peculiarities of some colleagues and of a certain section of his supporters placed him :—

> It is the unanimous desire of the cabinet that I should try to dissuade you. . . . It is a duty of a high order for you to do all you can for your health. . . . You hardly ever are absent from the House without some screw getting loose. I should write much more strongly if I did not feel I had a personal interest in the matter. In so strained a state as Europe is now in, the slightest thing may lead to great consequences, and it is possible that it may be a disadvantage to me and to the *chose publique* if anything occurs during the thirty-six hours you are absent.

This letter of Lord Granville's was written on July 10, 1870, just five days before war was declared between France and Prussia.

He wrote to the *Spectator* (May 1873) to correct a report 'that every day must begin for me with my old friend Homer.' He says :—'As to my beginning every day with Homer, as such a phrase conveys to the world a very untrue impression

of the demands of my present office, I think it right to mention that, so far as my memory serves me, I have not read Homer for fifty lines nor for a quarter of an hour consecutively for the last four years, and any dealings of mine with Homeric subjects have been confined to a number of days which could be readily counted on the fingers.' Yet at the end of 1869, he winds up a letter of business by saying, 'I must close; I am going to have a discussion with Huxley on the immortality of the soul!'

Who can wonder that after a prolonged spell of such a strain as this, he was found laying down strong doctrine about the age of a prime minister. Bishop Wilberforce met him twice in the May of 1873. 'Gladstone much talking how little real good work any premier had done after sixty: Peel; Palmerston, his work really all done before; Duke of Wellington added nothing to his reputation after. I told him Dr. Clark thought it would be physically worse for him to retire. "Dr. Clark does not know how completely I should employ myself," he replied.' Four days later: 'Gladstone again talking of sixty as full age of premier.'[1]

II

In words already quoted, Mr. Gladstone spoke of most of his life having been given to working the institutions of his country. Of all these institutions—House of Commons, Lords, cabinet, church, stern courts of law—that which he was most apt to idealise was the throne. His sense of chivalry and his sense of an august tradition continuously symbolised by a historic throne, moved him as the sight of the French Queen at Versailles had moved the majestic political imagination of Burke a century before. About the throne he sometimes used language that represented almost at its highest the value set upon it in text-books of the constitution, and in the current conventions of ceremonial speech.[2] Although what he called the iron necessities of actual business always threw these conventions into the background when the time came, yet his inmost feeling about the crown and the person of its wearer was as sincere as it was fervid. In business, it is true, he never yielded, yet even in his most anxious and pressing hours he spared neither time nor toil in endeavours to show the Queen why he could not yield. 'Though decisions,' he said, 'must ultimately conform to the sense of those who are to be responsible for them, yet their business is to inform and persuade the sovereign, not to overrule him.' One writer describes the Queen as 'superb in standing sentry over the business of the empire.' This is obsequious phrase-making. But I will borrow the figure in saying what is more real, that Mr. Gladstone from beginning to end stood sentry over the interests, whether

[1] May 6, 10, 1873. *Life of Wilberforce*, iii. p. 413. [2] *Gleanings*, i. pp. 232-3.

profound and enduring or trivial and fleeting, of the ancient monarchy of this kingdom. None who heard it, will ever forget the moving and energetic passage in which when he was the doughty veteran of eighty years, speaking against his own followers on some question of a royal annuity, he moved the whole House to its depths by the passionate declaration, 'I am not ashamed to say that in my old age I rejoice in any opportunity that enables me to testify that, whatever may be thought of my opinions, whatever may be thought of my proposals in general politics, I do not forget the service that I have borne to the illustrious representative of the British monarchy.'[1]

My readers have had opportunity enough of judging Mr. Gladstone's estimate of the Queen's shrewdness, simplicity, high manners. Above all, he constantly said how warmly he recognised her sincerity, frankness, straightforwardness, and love of truth. On the other side, his own eager mobility, versatility, and wide elastic range was not likely to be to the taste of a personage with a singular fixity of nature. Then the Queen was by the necessity of her station a politician, as was Elizabeth or George III., although oddly enough she had a bitter dislike of what she thought the madness of 'women's rights.' As politician, she often took views that were not shared either by the constituencies or by the ministers whom the constituencies imposed upon her. The Queen in truth excellently represented and incorporated in her proper person one whole set of those qualities in our national character, on which the power of her realm had been built up. Mr. Gladstone stood for a different and in some aspects and on some occasions almost an antagonistic set of national qualities. The Queen, according to those who knew her well,[2] dreaded what in the eighteenth century they called enthusiasm: she dreaded or disdained it in religion, and in politics almost more. Yet her Englishmen are full of capacity for enthusiasm, and the Scots for whom she had such cordial affection have enthusiasm in measure fuller still. Unhappily, in the case of Ireland that occupied so much of Mr. Gladstone's life, her sympathies with his long and vigorous endeavour notoriously stood at zero. The Queen's loyalty to the constitution and to ministers in office was unquestioned, but she was not well placed, nor was she perhaps by character well fitted, to gauge the fluctuating movements of an age of change, as it was the duty of her statesmen to gauge and plumb them. If a cabinet with the confidence of the House of Commons decides upon a policy, it must obviously be a premier's duty to persist, and in that duty Mr. Gladstone was resolute. If he had been otherwise, he knew that he would be falling short in loyalty to the country, and to its chief magistrate most of all.

[1] July 25, 1889.

[2] See the remarkable article in the *Quarterly Review*, April 1901, p. 320.

In 1871 a wave of critical feeling began to run upon the throne. An influential journalist of that day, singularly free from any tincture of republican sentiment, thus describes it. 'A few weeks ago,' he says, 'a deep and universal feeling of discontent at the Queen's seclusion (or rather at its consequences) found voice in the journals of the country. No public print of any importance failed to take part in the chorus; which was equally remarkable for its suddenness, fulness, and harmony. Indeed, the suddenness of the cry was surprising—till we remembered that what was then said had lain unexpressed in the minds of the whole community for years, with annual increment; and that when popular feeling gathers in that way, it is generally relieved at last by something of the nature of an explosion.' He then goes on to speak of 'republicanism of a very revolutionary form flooding in,' and says that such a complexion of affairs could be viewed with pleasure by no friend of the monarchy.[1] The details of this movement are no longer of much interest, and they only concern us here because they gave Mr. Gladstone real anxiety. For him it was one of the special duties of a prime minister, as distinguished from his cabinet, to watch and guard relations between the crown and the country. Whether in office or in opposition, he lost no opportunity of standing forth between the throne and even a faint shadow of popular or parliamentary discontent. He had done it in the case of Prince Albert,[2] and he did it now. When the end came after nearly thirty years from our present date, the Queen wrote: 'I shall ever gratefully remember his devotion and zeal in all that concerned my personal welfare and that of my family.' In 1871 his zeal went beyond the Queen's personal welfare, and his solicitude for the situation represented by the Queen undoubtedly took a form of deferential exhortation—an exhortation that she should return to a fuller discharge of public duty, which the Queen found irksome. The Queen was as fond of Balmoral as Mr. Gladstone was fond of Hawarden. The contrast between the formality of Windsor and the atmosphere of simple attachment and social affection that surrounded her in Scotland, was as delightful to her as the air and the scenery. A royal progress through applauding multitudes in great cities made her ill. Hence, when Mr. Gladstone pressed her to defer a northern journey, or to open parliament, or to open a bridge, or otherwise emerge from seclusion, the Queen, though well aware that he had not, and could not have, any motive save her own and the public interest, undoubtedly felt that her energetic minister was attempting to overwork her. This feeling, as most of us know, breeds resistance, and even in time resentment. To say, however, that 'in his eagerness Mr. Gladstone pressed her

[1] *Pall Mall Gazette*, Sept. 29, 1871.

[2] See Appendix.

to do what she knew to be not her work so much as his,' is misleading and a little ludicrous.[1] Mr. Gladstone had persuaded himself that in the humour of the day persistence in seclusion did harm ; it was his duty to give advice accordingly, and this duty he could not consent to shirk.

In other ways his very awe of the institution made him set an exacting standard for the individual who represented it. The letters contain a hundred instances. One may suffice. On the occasion of the Irish Church bill of 1869, the prime minister sent to the Queen a print of its clauses, and along with this draft a letter, covering over a dozen closely-written quarto pages, in explanation. Himself intensely absorbed and his whole soul possessed by the vital importance of what he was doing, he could not conceive that the sovereign, nursing a decided dislike of his policy, should not eagerly desire to get to the bottom of the provisions for carrying the policy out. The Queen read the letter, and re-read it, and then in despair desired a gentleman practised in dealing with parliamentary bills, happening at that time to be at Osborne, to supply her with a summary.[2] The gaunt virtues of a *précis*—a meagre thing where qualifying sentences drop off, parentheses are cut out, adverbs hardly count, the noun stands denuded of its sheltering adjective—were never congenial to Mr. Gladstone's copious exactitude in hypothesis, conditions, and contingencies. Neither of these two illustrious personages was without humour, and it seems at once a wonder and a pity that the monarch did less than justice to this laborious and almost military sense of discipline and duty in the minister ; while the minister failed in genial allowance for the moderation of a royal lady's appetite for bread and honey from the draftsman's kitchen. If failing, there was, it was natural to a man of earnest and concentrated mind. Be all this as it may, he became more and more conscious that the correspondence and occurrences of 1871-2 had introduced a reserve that was new. Perhaps it recalled to him the distance and formality that marked the relations between King George III. and the proudest, the most intrepid, and the greatest of his prime ministers.

III

Once in a conversation with Mr. Gladstone I asked him whether he remembered Peel's phrase to Cobden about the odious power that patronage confers. He replied, 'I never felt that, when I was prime minister. It came in the day's work like the rest. I don't recall that I ever felt plagued by improper applications. Peel was perhaps a little over fond of

[1] *Quarterly Review* for April, 1901, p. 305.

[2] This circumstance is accurately told, among other places, in Mr. Sidney Lee's *Queen Victoria.*

talking of the sacrifices of office. A man has no business to lay himself out for being prime minister, or to place himself in the way of it, unless he is prepared to take all the incidents of the post whether disagreeable or not. I've no sympathy with talk of that kind.' He was far from the mind of Carteret. 'What is it to me,' cried that glittering minister, 'who is a judge or who is a bishop? It is my business to make kings and emperors, and to maintain the balance of Europe.'

To the bestowal of honours he brought the same diligent care as to branches of public business that to men of Peel's type seem worthier of care. He treated honours on fixed considerations. Especially in the altitudes of the peerage, he tried hard to find solid political ground to go upon. He noted the remarkable fact that though a very large majority of the peerages granted since 1835 had been made on the advice of liberal ministers, yet such is the influence of wealth and privileged station that the liberal minority in the Lords had decreased. In 1869 the conservative majority was between sixty and seventy, without counting bishops or nominal liberals. Yet household suffrage at this very time had immensely increased the moral strength of the House of Commons. The crisis upon the Irish church had been borne with impatience, and Mr. Gladstone discerned a combustible temper at the action of the Lords that might easily have burst into flame. Still he saw no signal plan for improving the upper House. The appointment of life peers might be desirable, he said, but it was not easy to arrange, nor could its effect be great. The means of action therefore for bringing the Lords into more conformity or better proportions to the Commons, were very moderate. But that made it all the more important that they should not be overlooked. The governing idea in respect of both classes of hereditary honours was in his judgment the maintenance of a due relation between the numbers in those elevated ranks, and the number of persons offering the proper conditions for promotion of this kind, in a country so rapidly growing in wealth and population.

With characteristic love of making knowledge quantitative—one definition, I rather think, of science—Mr. Gladstone caused returns to be prepared for him, which showed that in 1840 there were about seventeen peers for every million of the population, while in 1869 this number had fallen to fourteen (in 1880 it was about the same). Lord Palmerston in his second government appears to have recommended sixteen peerages, and Lord Derby in little more than a quarter of the time recommended fourteen. Mr. Gladstone himself, during his first administration, excluding royal, non-political and *ex-officio* peerages, added thirty members to the House of Lords, besides making five promotions. In the same period twelve peerages became extinct. Lord Beaconsfield (counting the same exclusions)

created between 1874 and 1880 twenty-six new peers, and made nine promotions.[1]

In two directions Mr. Gladstone made an honourable innovation. He recommended a member of the Jewish faith for a peerage, and in the first list of his submissions to the Queen two Roman catholics were included. No catholic peer had been created within living memory. One of these two was Lord Acton, afterwards so intimate a friend, whose character, he told the Queen, 'is of the first order, and he is one of the most learned and accomplished, though one of the most modest and unassuming, men of the day.' If religious profession was not in his eyes relevant in making peers, neither was the negation of profession, for at the same time he proposed a peerage to Grote. 'I deeply and gratefully appreciate,' he wrote to Mr. Gladstone, 'the sentiments you are pleased to express respecting my character and services. These I shall treasure up never to be forgotten, coming as they do from a minister who has entered on the work of reform with a sincerity and energy never hitherto paralleled. Such recognition is the true and sufficient recompense for all useful labours of mine.'[2]

At the same time the prime minister thought that some honour ought to be tendered to Mr. Mill, but Lord Granville, whom he consulted, thought otherwise, 'merely on the ground that honours should go as much as possible with general acceptance.' Lord Granville was a man of thoroughly liberal and even generous mind; still not particularly qualified to be a good judge either of the merits of a man like Mill, or of his 'acceptance' in circles well worth considering.

IV

It was to be expected that preferments in the church should get a special share of Mr. Gladstone's laborious attention, and so they did. As member for Oxford he had been so much importuned in Lord Palmerston's time, that he wrote in a moment of unusual impatience (1863), 'I think these church preferments will be the death of me.' Palmerston favoured the evangelicals, and Mr. Gladstone was mortified that Church did not succeed Stanley in the chair of ecclesiastical history at Oxford, and that Wilberforce was not elevated to the throne of York in 1862.

During his first administration he recommended for no fewer than twelve bishoprics and eight deaneries. He was not unpre-

[1] During the twelve years in which Mr. Gladstone was prime minister, he was answerable for sixty-seven new peerages (twenty-two of these now extinct), and on his recommendation fourteen Scotch and Irish peers were called to the House of Lords. In addition, he was responsible for seven promotions of peers to higher rank. During the same period ninety-seven baronetcies were created.—See Sir Edward Hamilton, *Mr. Gladstone, a Monograph*, p. 97.

[2] *Life of Grote*, pp. 306-10.

pared to find, as he put it to Acland, that 'saints, theologians, preachers, pastors, scholars, philosophers, gentlemen, men of business,—these are not to be had every day, least of all are they to be commonly found in combination. But these are the materials which ought to be sought out, and put forward in the church of England, if she is to stand the trials, and do her work.'

According to his fashion, he wrote down upon a fragmentary piece of paper what qualifications he ought to look for in a bishop, and this is the list :—

Piety. Learning (sacred). Eloquence. Administrative power. Faithful allegiance to the Church and to the church of England. Activity. Tact and courtesy in dealings with men : knowledge of the world. Accomplishments and literature. An equitable spirit. Faculty of working with his brother bishops. Some legal habit of mind. Circumspection. Courage. Maturity of age and character. Corporal vigour. Liberal sentiments on public affairs. A representative character with reference to shades of opinion fairly allowable in the Church.

One of his earliest preferments, that of Dr. Temple to the bishopric of Exeter, created lively excitement. He had been a contributor to *Essays and Reviews* :—

On some of the papers contained in the volume, Mr. Gladstone wrote to the Bishop of Lichfield, I look with a strong aversion. But Dr. Temple's responsibility prior to the publication was confined to his own essay. The question whether he ought to have disclaimed or denounced any part of the volume afterwards is a difficult one, and if it was a duty, it was a duty in regard to which a generous man might well go wrong. As regards his own essay, I read it at the time of publication, and thought it of little value, but did not perceive that it was mischievous.

In speaking of him to Acland in 1865, Mr. Gladstone had let fall a truly remarkable saying, going deep down to the roots of many things :—

You need not assure me of Dr. Temple's Christian character. I have read his sermons, and if I had doubted—but I never did—they would have removed the doubt. Indeed I think it a most formidable responsibility, at the least, in these times to doubt any man's character on account of his opinions. The limit of possible variation between character and opinion, ay, between character and belief, is widening, and will widen.

How could the leading mark of progress made in Mr. Gladstone's age be more truly hit, how defined with more pith and pregnancy? How could the illumination of his own vigorous mind in forty years of life and thought be better demonstrated? It would even be no bad thing if those who are furthest removed from Mr. Gladstone's opinions either in religion or politics could lay this far-reaching dictum of his to heart. By many men in all schools his lesson is sorely needed. Shrill was the clamour. Dr. Pusey, in Mr. Gladstone's own phrase, was 'rabid.' He justified his anger by reputed facts, which proved to be no facts

at all, but the anger did not die with the fable. Even Phillimore was disquieted. 'It has cut very deep indeed,' he said. Mr. Gladstone, confident of his ground, was not dismayed. 'The movement against Dr. Temple is like a peculiar cheer we sometimes hear in the House of Commons, vehement but thin.'

No appointment proved so popular and successful as that of Bishop Fraser to Manchester. He was the first person named by Mr. Gladstone for the episcopate without some degree of personal knowledge. A remarkable concurrence of testimony established the great breadth of his sympathies, a trait much in his favour for the particular see of Manchester. Yet strange to say when by and by Stanley died, Mr. Gladstone was a party to trying to remove Fraser from the north to Westminster.'

When in 1883 Mr. Gladstone was challenged as confining his recommendations to the high church side, he defended himself to sufficient purpose. He had a list made out of appointments to bishoprics, deaneries, and the most important parishes :—

There have been thirty important appointments. Out of them I have recommended eleven who would probably be called high churchmen (not one of them, so far as I know, unsympathetic towards other portions of the clergy) and nineteen who are not.

On further examination it will appear that the high churchmen, whom I take to be a decided majority of the clergy as well as a decided minority of my recommendations, have gone as a rule to the places of hard work and little pay. For example, they have got five out of ten *parochial* recommendations; but, out of sixteen appointments to deaneries and canonries, they have received four, and those, with the exception of Mr. Furse, the worst. I could supply you with the lists in detail.

One admission I must make; the evidently broad churchmen are too large a proportion of the non-high, and the low churchmen rather too small, a disproportion which I should hope to remove, but undoubtedly the low churchman of the present day has a poorer share than half a century ago of the working energy of the church.

All these terms, High, Low and Broad, are rather repugnant to me, but I use them as a currency of tokens with which it is difficult to dispense.

Turning from this point of view to the recognition of learning and genius, in the course of his first administration we find that he made Church dean of St. Paul's, and Scott of the Greek lexicon dean of Rochester, Liddon and Lightfoot canons of St. Paul's, Kingsley canon first of Chester, and then of Westminster, Vaughan master of the Temple.

CHAPTER XI

CATHOLIC COUNTRY AND PROTESTANT PARLIAMENT

(*1873*)

It is all very well to establish united education, but if the persons to be educated decline to unite, your efforts will be thrown away. The question then occurs whether it is best to establish a system, rejected by those concerned, in the hope that it will gradually work its way into acceptance in spite of the intolerance of priests, or to endow the separate denominational bodies on the ground that even such education is better than none, or, finally, to do nothing. The question is one of statesmanship enlightened by a knowledge of facts, and of the sentiments of the population.—LESLIE STEPHEN.

DESCENDING from her alien throne, the Irish church had now taken her place among the most prosperous of free communions. To Irish cultivators a definite interest of possession had been indirectly confirmed in the land to which most of its value had been given by their own toil. A third branch of the upas tree of poisonous ascendency described by Mr. Gladstone during the election of 1868, still awaited his axe. The fitness of an absentee parliament to govern Ireland was again to be tested. This time the problem was hardest of all, for it involved direct concession by nations inveterately protestant, to a catholic hierarchy having at its head an ultramontane cardinal of uncompromising opinions and inexorable will.

Everybody knew that the state of university education in Ireland stood in the front rank of unsettled questions. Ever since the establishment of three provincial colleges by Peel's government in 1845, the flame of the controversy had been alight. Even on the very night when Graham introduced the bill creating them, no less staunch a tory and protestant than Sir Robert Inglis had jumped up and denounced 'a gigantic scheme of godless education.' The catholics loudly echoed this protestant phrase. The three colleges were speedily condemned by the pope as fatal to faith and morals, and were formally denounced by the synod of Thurles in 1850. The fulminations of the church did not extinguish these modest centres of light and knowledge, but they cast a creeping blight upon them. In 1865 a demand was openly made in parliament for the in-

corporation by charter of a specifically catholic university. Mr. Gladstone, along with Sir George Grey, then admitted the reality of a grievance, namely, the absence in Ireland of institutions of which the catholics of the country were able to avail themselves. Declining, for good reasons or bad, to use opportunities of college education by the side of protestants, and not warmed by the atmosphere and symbols of their own church and faith, catholics contended that they could not be said to enjoy equal advantages with their fellow-citizens of other creeds. They repudiated a system of education repugnant to their religious convictions, and in the persistent efforts to force 'godless education' on their country, they professed to recognise another phase of persecution for conscience' sake.

In 1866, Lord Russell's government tried its hand with a device known as the supplemental charter. It opened a way to a degree without passing through the godless colleges. This was set aside by an injunction from the courts, and it would not have touched the real matter of complaint, even if the courts had let it stand. Next year the tories burnt their fingers, though Mr. Disraeli told parliament that he saw no scars. For a time, he believed that an honourable and satisfactory settlement was possible, and negotiations went on with the hierarchy. The prelates did not urge endowment, Mr. Disraeli afterwards said, but 'they mentioned it.' The country shrank back from concurrent endowment, though, as Mr. Disraeli truly said, it was the policy of Pitt, of Grey, of Russell, of Peel, and of Palmerston. Ever since 1794, catholic students had been allowed to graduate at Trinity College, and ever since the disestablishment of the Irish church in 1869, Trinity had asked parliament for power to admit catholics to her fellowships and emoluments. This, however, did not go to the root, whether we regard it as sound or unsound, of the catholic grievance, which was in fact their lack of an endowed institution as distinctively catholic in all respects as Trinity was protestant.

Such was the case with which Mr. Gladstone was called upon to grapple, and a delicate if not even a desperate case it was. The prelates knew what they wished, though they lay in shadow. What they wanted a protestant parliament, with its grip upon the purse, was determined that they should not have. The same conclusion as came to many liberals by prejudice, was reached by the academic school on principle. On principle they held denominational endowment of education to be retrograde and obscurantist. Then there was the discouraging consideration of which Lord Halifax reminded Mr. Gladstone. 'You say with truth,' he observed when the situation had developed, 'that the liberal party are behaving very ill, and so they are. But liberal majorities when large are apt to run riot. No men could have stronger claims

on the allegiance of their party than Lord Grey and Lord Althorp after carrying the Reform bill. Nevertheless, the large majority after the election of 1832-3 was continually putting the government into difficulty.' So it befell now, and now as then the difficulty was Irish.

II

Well knowing the hard work before him, Mr. Gladstone applied himself with his usual indomitable energy to the task. 'We go to Oxford to-morrow,' he writes to Lord Granville (Nov. 12), 'to visit Edward Talbot and his wife; forward to London on Thursday, when I dine with the Templars. My idea of work is that the first solid and heavy bit should be the Irish university — some of this may require to be done in cabinet. When we have got that into shape, I should be for taking to the yet stiffer work of local taxation — most of the cabinet take a personal interest in this. I think it will require immeasurable talking over, which might be done chiefly in an open informal cabinet, before any binding resolutions are taken. But I propose to let Palmer have his say (general) about law reform on Friday.' At Oxford he saw Dr. Pusey, 'who behaved with all his old kindness, and seemed to have forgotten the Temple[1] business, or rather as if it had never been.' On November 20, he records, 'Cabinet 2¾-6½. Some heads of a measure on Irish university education.' No communications were opened with the Irish bishops beforehand, probably from a surmise that they would be bound to ask more than they could obtain.

Jan. 16, 1873, *Hawarden.*—Dr. Ingram [the distinguished fellow of Trinity College] came in afternoon, and I was able to spend several hours with him on the university question. 17.—Many hours with Dr. Ingram on the bill and scheme; in truth, almost from breakfast to dinner. Conversation with him in evening on Homer and ancient questions. Read *Old Mortality*. 20.—Drew an abstract of historical facts respecting Dublin university and college. 21.—Off at 11. At 11 C.H.T. at 6 P.M. 25.—Mr. Thring 3-5½ on Irish bill. Attended Lord Lytton's funeral in the Abbey. The church lighted in a frost-fog was sublime. 31. Cabinet spent many hours in settling Irish university bill. *Feb.* 2.—Paid a mournful visit to the death-bedside of my old friend Milnes Gaskell. . . . Death has been very busy around me. 8.—Cabinet 2½-6½. Passed the Irish university bill. 13.—Worked until three upon my materials. Then drove and walked. H. of C. 4¼-8½. I spoke three hours in introducing the Irish university bill with much detailed explanation. (*Diary.*)

Phillimore has an interesting note or two on his friend at this critical time:—

Feb. 2.—Gladstone looking well, but much aged. Spoke of anxiety to retire when he could do so with honour, said he had *forced* himself

[1] The promotion of Dr. Temple to the bench.

into the study of the whole question relating to Trinity College, Dublin, and that he was sure that his enemies did not understand the very curious facts relative to the university. It seemed as if he meant to frame the government measure on a historical and antiquarian basis. This will not satisfy the country if the practical result is to place more power in the hands of the papists. 10.—Gladstone looked very worn and anxious. Spoke about the relief he should experience after Thursday, the weight of the matter which he had to deal with, and the general misapprehension which prevailed; thought the tide was turning in their favour. 11.—Gladstone in high spirits, confident of success on Thursday. 14.—Dined at Gladstone's. Our host in high spirits at his achievement of yesterday.

The leading provisions of the measure, though found by the able and expert draftsman unusually hard to frame, may be very shortly stated, for the question by the way is still in full blast. A new university of Dublin was to rise, a teaching as well as an examining body, governed by a council who were to appoint officers and regulate all matters and things affecting the university. The constitution of this governing council was elaborately devised, and it did not make clerical predominance ultimately impossible. The affiliation of colleges, not excluding purely denominational institutions, was in their hands. There were to be no religious tests for either teachers or taught, and religious profession was to be no bar to honours and emoluments. Money was provided by Trinity College, the consolidated fund, and the church surplus, to the tune of £50,000 a year. The principle was the old formula of mixed or united education, in which protestants and catholics might side by side participate.

What many found intolerably obnoxious were two 'gagging clauses.' By one of these a teacher or other person of authority might be suspended or deprived, who should in speaking or writing be held to have wilfully given offence to the religious convictions of any member. The second and graver of them was the prohibition of any university teacher in theology, modern history, or moral and mental philosophy. The separate affiliated colleges might make whatever arrangements they pleased for these subjects, but the new university would not teach them directly and authoritatively. This was undoubtedly a singular limitation for a university that had sent forth Berkeley and Burke; nor was there ever a moment when in spite of the specialisation of research, the deepest questions in the domain of thought and belief more inevitably thrust themselves forward within common and indivisible precincts.

III

On Feb. 14, Mr. Gladstone reported to the Queen:—

The general impression last night appeared to be that the friends of Trinity College were relieved; that the liberal party and the noncon-

formists were well satisfied with the conformity between the proposed measure and the accepted principles of university organization in England; but that the Roman catholics would think themselves hardly or at least not generously used. All that Mr. Gladstone has heard this morning through private channels, as well as the general tone of the press, tends to corroborate the favourable parts of what he gathered last night, and to give hope that reasonable and moderate Roman catholics may see that their real grievances will be removed; generally also to support the expectation that the bill is not unlikely to pass.

Delane of the *Times* said to Manning when they were leaving the House of Commons, 'This is a bill made to pass.' Manning himself heartily acquiesced. Even the bitterest of Mr. Gladstone's critics below the gangway on his own side agreed, that if a division could have been taken while the House was still under the influence of the three hours' speech, the bill would have been almost unanimously carried.[1] 'It threw the House into a mesmeric trance,' said the seconder of a hostile motion. Effects like these, not purple passages, not epigrams nor aphorisms, are the test of oratory. Mr. Bruce wrote home (Feb. 15):—'Alas! I fear all prospect of ministerial defeat is over. The University bill is so well received that people say there will not be even a division on the second reading. I see no other rock ahead, but sometimes they project their snouts unexpectedly, and cause shipwreck.'

Soon did the projecting rocks appear out of the smooth water. Lord Spencer had an interview with Cardinal Cullen at Dublin Castle (Feb. 25), and found him though in very good humour and full of gratitude for fair intentions, yet extremely hostile to the bill. It was in flat opposition, he said, to what the Roman catholics had been working for in Ireland for years; it continued the Queen's Colleges, and set up another Queen's College in the shape of Trinity College with a large endowment; it perpetuated the mixed system of education, to which he had always been opposed, and no endowment nor assistance was given to the catholic university; the council might appoint professors to teach English literature, geology, or zoology who would be dangerous men in catholic eyes. Lord Spencer gathered that the cardinal would be satisfied with a sum down to redress inequality or a grant for buildings.

Archbishop Manning wrote to Cardinal Cullen the day after the bill was produced, 'strongly urging them to accept it.' It seemed to him to rest on a base so broad that he could not tell how either the opposition or the radical doctrinaires could attack it without adopting 'the German tyranny.' He admitted that he was more easily satisfied than if he were in Ireland, but he thought the measure framed with skill and success. After a fortnight the Archbishop told Mr. Gladstone, that he still saw reason to believe that the Irish hierarchy would not refuse the

[1] Stephen's *Life of Fawcett*, p. 282.

bill. On March 3rd, he says he has done his utmost to conciliate confidence in it. By the 7th he knew that his efforts had failed, but he urges Mr. Gladstone not to take the episcopal opposition too much to heart. 'Non-endowment, mixed education, and godless colleges, are three bitter things to them.' 'This,' he wrote to Mr. Gladstone, when all was over (March 12), 'is not your fault, nor the bill's fault, but the fault of England and Scotland and three anti-catholic centuries.'

The debate began on March 3rd, and extended to four sittings. The humour of the House was described by Mr. Gladstone as 'fitful and fluctuating.' Speeches 'void of real argument or point, yet aroused the mere prejudices of a section of the liberal party against popery and did much to place the bill in danger.' Then that cause of apprehension disappeared, and a new change passed over the shifting sky, for the intentions of Irish members were reported to be dubious. There was not a little heat and passion, mainly from below the ministerial gangway. The gagging clauses jarred horribly, though they were trenchantly defended by Mr. Lowe, the very man to whose line of knowledge and intellectual freedom they seemed likely to be most repugnant. It soon appeared that neither protestant nor catholic set any value on these securities for conscience, and the general assembly of the presbyterians declared war upon the whole scheme. The cabinet—'most harmonious at this critical time,'—still held firmly that the bill was well constructed, so that if it once reached committee it would not be easy to inflict mortal wounds. On March 8th the prime minister reported to the Queen :—

> Strange to say, it is the opposition of the Roman catholic bishops that brings about the present difficulty ; and this although they have not declared an opposition to the bill outright, but have wound up their list of objections with a resolution to present petitions praying for its amendment. Still their attitude of what may be called growling hostility has had these important results. Firstly, it has deadened that general willingness of the liberal party, which the measure itself had created, to look favourably on a plan such as they might hope would obtain acquiescence, and bring about contentment. Secondly, the great majority of the bishops are even more hostile than the resolutions, which were apparently somewhat softened as the price of unanimity ; and all *these* bishops, working upon liberal Irish members through their political interest in their seats, have proceeded so far that from twenty to twenty-five may go against the bill, and as many may stay away. When to these are added the small knot of discontented liberals and mere fanatics which so large a party commonly contains, the government majority, now taken at only 85, disappears. . . .
>
> It is not in the power or the will of your Majesty's advisers to purchase Irish support by subserviency to the Roman bishops. Their purpose has been to offer justice to all, and their hope has been that what was just would be seen to be advantageous. As far as the Roman catholics of Ireland are concerned, the cabinet conceive that they are

now at perfect liberty to throw up the bill. But they are also of opinion that its abandonment would so impair or destroy their moral power, as to render it impossible for them to accept the defeat. There are whispers of a desire in the liberal party, should the catastrophe arrive, to meet it by a vote of confidence, which would probably be carried by a still larger majority. But the cabinet look with extreme disfavour upon this method of proceeding, which would offer them the verbal promise of support just when its substance had been denied.

He then proceeds to more purely personal aspects and contingencies :—

What lies beyond it would be premature to describe as having been regularly treated or even opened to-day. Mr. Gladstone considers himself far more tied to the bill and the subject than his colleagues ; and if they upon a defeat were disposed to carry on the government without him, he would with your Majesty's sanction take effectual means to provide at least against his being an impediment in the way of an arrangement eligible in so many points of view. But his colleagues appear at present indisposed to adopt this method of solution. There would then remain for them the question whether they should humbly tender their resignations to your Majesty, or whether they should advise a dissolution of the parliament, which was elected under other auspices. This would be a matter of the utmost gravity for consideration at the proper time. Mr. Gladstone as at present advised has no foregone conclusion in favour of either alternative, and would act with his colleagues as between them. But he does not intend to go into opposition, and the dissolution of this government, brought about through languor and through extensive or important defections in the liberal party which has made him its leader, would be the close of his political life. He has now for more than forty years striven to serve the crown and country to the best of his power, and he is willing, though with overtaxed faculties and diminishing strength, to continue the effort longer, if he sees that the continuance can be conducive to the objects which he has heretofore had at heart ; but the contingency to which he has last referred, would be for him the proof that confidence was gone, that usefulness was at an end, and that he might and ought to claim the freedom which best befits the close of life.

The next day, in reporting that the estimates of the coming division were far from improving, Mr. Gladstone returned in a few words to the personal point :—

Mr. Gladstone is very grateful for your Majesty's caution against being swayed by private feelings, and he will endeavour to be on his guard against them. He has, however, always looked to the completion of that commission, so to call it, which events in a measure threw into his hands five years ago, as the natural close of the main work of the present government ; and many circumstances have combined to impress him with the hope that thus an honourable path would be opened for his retirement. He ought, perhaps, to add that he has the strongest opinion, upon political grounds and grounds other than political, against spending old age under the strain of that perpetual contention which is inseparable from his present position ; and this opinion could only be neutralised by his perceiving a special call to remain : that is to say, some course of

public service to be done by him better than if it were in other hands. Such a prospect he neither sees nor anticipates. But it is premature to trouble your Majesty on this minor subject.

On the 9th Cardinal Cullen blazed forth in a pastoral that was read in all the churches. He described the bill as richly endowing non-catholic and godless colleges, and without giving one farthing to catholics, inviting them to compete in their poverty, produced by penal laws and confiscations, with those left in possession of enormous wealth. The new university scheme only increased the number of Queen's Colleges, so often and so solemnly condemned by the catholic church and by all Ireland, and gave a new impulse to that sort of teaching that separates education from religion and its holy influences, and banishes God, the author of all good, from our schools. The prelate's pastoral had a decisive effect in regions far removed from the ambit of his crosier. The tory leader could not resist a temptation thus offered by the attitude of the Irish cardinal, and the measure that had been much reviled as a dark concordat between Mr. Gladstone and the pope, was now rejected by a concordat between the pope's men and Mr. Disraeli.

The discussion was on a high level in Mr. Gladstone's judgment. Lyon Playfair criticised details with some severity and much ability, but intended to vote for the bill. Miall, the nonconformist leader, supported the second reading, but required alterations that were admissible enough. On March 10 Mr. Harcourt, who was not yet an old member, 'opened the discussion by a speech in advance of any he has yet delivered as to effect upon the House. Severe in criticism on detail, he was favourable to the substance of the bill.' One significant incident of the debate was a declaration by Bentinck, a conservative ultra, that he would vote against the bill in reliance on the declaration of Mr. Hardy, which he understood to be a pledge for himself and others near him, not to take office during the existence of the present parliament. 'Mr Hardy remained silent during this appeal, which was several times repeated.' Then the end came (March 11-12) :—

Mr. Disraeli rose at half-past ten, and spoke amidst rapt attention till midnight. Mr. Gladstone followed in a speech of two hours, and at two o'clock the division was called. During the whole evening the greatest uncertainty had prevailed ; for himself Mr. Gladstone leaned to expecting an unfavourable result. The numbers were, Ayes (for the government), 284 ; Noes, 287 ; majority against the government, 3. It is said that 45 adherents of the government, or thereabouts, voted against them. It was the Irish vote that grew continually worse.[1]

[1] The adverse majority was made up of 209 English, 68 Irish, and 10 Scotch members. The minority contained 222 English, 47 Scotch, and 15 Irish members. The absentees numbered 75, of whom 53 were English, 3 Scotch, and 19 Irish. There voted with the opposition 43 liberals—eight English and Scotch, including Mr. Bouverie, Mr. Fawcett, Mr. Horsman, Sir Robert Peel, and 35 Irish, of whom 25 were catholics and 10 protestants.

Of the speech in which the debate was wound up Forster says in his diary:—'Gladstone, with the House dead against him and his bill, made a wonderful speech—easy, almost playful, with passages of great power and eloquence, but with a graceful play, which enabled him to plant deep his daggers of satire in Horsman and Co.'[1] Speaker Brand calls it 'a magnificent speech, generous, high-minded, and without a taint of bitterness, although he was sorely tried, especially by false friends.' He vindicated the obnoxious clauses, but did not wish to adhere to them if opinion from all quarters were adverse, and he admitted that it was the opposition of members from Ireland that principally acted on his hearers. His speech contained a remarkable passage, pronouncing definitely against denominational endowment of university education.

[1] *Life of W. E. Forster*, i. p. 550.

CHAPTER XII

THE CRISIS

(*1873*)

*

. . alla fortuna, come vuol, son presto . .
Però giri fortuna la sua rota,
Come le piace, e il villan la sua marra.
Inferno, xv. 93.

For fortune as she wills I am ready . . so
let her turn her wheel as she may please,
and the churl his spade.

A WEEK of lively and eventful interest followed,—not only interesting in the life of Mr. Gladstone, but raising points with important constitutional bearings, and showing a match between two unsurpassed masters of political sword-play. The story was told generally and partially in parliament, but the reader who is curious about either the episode itself, or Mr. Gladstone's modes of mind and action, will find it worth a little trouble to follow details with some closeness.

March 11.—H. of C. Spoke 12-2, and voted in a division of 284-287—which was believed to cause more surprise to the opposite side than it did to me. At 2.45 A.M. I apprised the Queen of our defeat.

Thursday, March 12.—Saw the Queen at 12.15. Failed to find Granville. Cabinet 1-2¾. We discussed the matter with a general tendency to resignation rather than dissolving. Confab. on my position with Granville and Glyn, then joined by Bright. To the Queen again at six to keep her informed. Large dinner party for the Duke of Edinburgh, and an evening party afterwards, to hear Joachim.

Friday, March 13.—After seeing Mr. Glyn and Lord F. Cavendish, I went at 10.40 to see Dr. Clark. He completed his examination, and gave me his careful judgment. I went to Lord Granville, sketched out to him and Glyn my views, and went to the cabinet at 12.15. Stated the case between the two alternatives of resignation and dissolution as far as regarded myself. On the side of resignation it would not be necessary to make any final announcement [of his retirement from the leadership]. I am strongly advised a temporary rest. On the other hand, if we now dissolve, I anticipate that *afterwards* before any long time difficulties will arise, and my mission will be terminated. So that the alternatives are

not so unequally weighed. The cabinet without any marked difference, or at least without any positive assertion to the contrary, determined on tendering their resignations.[1] After cabinet saw Hartington and others respecting honours. At 2.45 saw the Queen and resigned. The Queen informed me that she would send for Mr. Disraeli; suggested for consideration whether I would include the mention of this fact in my announcement to parliament, and added as I was leaving the room, without looking (apparently) for an answer, that she would inform me of what might take place. At 3.45 saw Granville respecting the announcements. Made announcement in House of Commons at 4.30. More business at Downing Street, and home at six.

At a quarter to seven, or a little later, Colonel Ponsonby called with a communication from her Majesty. 'Any news?' I said. 'A great deal,' he replied; and informed me as follows. Mr. Disraeli had been with the Queen; did not see the means of carrying on the government by the agency of his party under present circumstances; did not ask for the dissolution of parliament (this was understood to mean did not offer to become minister on condition of being permitted to dissolve); did not say that his renunciation of the task was final; recommended that the Queen should call for my advice. Upon this the Queen sent Colonel Ponsonby, and he said, 'She considers this as sending for you anew.' I replied that I did not regard the Queen's reference of this intelligence to me, as her calling upon me anew to undertake the work of government; that none of my obligations to the sovereign were cancelled or impaired by the resignation tendered and accepted; that I was still the minister for the purpose of rendering any service she might be pleased to call for in the matter on which she is engaged, exactly as before, until she has a new minister, when my official obligations will come to an end. That I felt there was great inconvenience and danger of misapprehension out of doors in proceeding over rapidly with a matter of such gravity, and that each step in it required to be well measured and ascertained before proceeding to consider of the next following step. That I had great difficulty in gathering any precise idea of Mr. Disraeli's account of what he could not do, and what he either could or did not say that he could not. That as this account was to present to me the state of facts on which I was commanded to advise, it was quite necessary for me to have an accurate idea of it, in order that I might do justice to her Majesty's commands. I would therefore humbly suggest that Mr. Disraeli might with great propriety be requested to put his reply into writing. That I presumed I might receive this reply, if it were her Majesty's pleasure to make it known to me, at some not late hour to-morrow, when I would at once place myself in a condition to tender my humble advice. This is an account of what Colonel Ponsonby might fairly consider as my answer to her Majesty's communication. I enlarged the conversation, however, by observing that the division which overthrew us was a party division. It bore the express authentic symbol of its character in having party tellers on the opposition as well as on the government side; that we were aware of the great, even more than ordinary, efforts of Colonel Taylor, with Mr. Disraeli's counten-

[1] *March* 13.—Cabinet again at twelve. Decided to resign . . . Gladstone made quite a touching little speech. He began playfully. This was the last of some 130 cabinets or so, and he wished to say to his colleagues with what 'profound gratitude' - and here he completely broke down, and he could say nothing, except that he could not enter on the details. . . . Tears came to my eyes, and we were all touched.—*Life of W. E. Forster*, ii. pp. 350, 351.

ance, to bring members to London and to the House; that all this seemed to impose great obligations on the opposition; and if so, that it would be the duty of the leader of the opposition to use every exertion of consultation with his friends and otherwise before declining the task, or in any manner advising the Queen to look elsewhere. To Colonel Ponsonby indeed, I observed that I thought Mr. Disraeli was endeavouring, by at once throwing back on me an offer which it was impossible for me at the time and under the circumstances to accept, to get up a case of absolute necessity founded upon this refusal of mine, and thus, becoming the indispensable man and party, to have in his hands a lever wherewith to overcome the reluctance and resistance of his friends, who would not be able to deny that the Queen must have a government.

Mr. Disraeli's reply to the Queen's inquiry whether he was prepared to form a government, was put into writing, and the two operative paragraphs of it were sent through Colonel Ponsonby to Mr. Gladstone. They ran as follows:—

In answer, Mr. Disraeli said he was prepared to form an administration which he believed would carry on her Majesty's affairs with efficiency, and would possess her confidence; but he could not undertake to carry on her Majesty's government in the present House of Commons. Subsequently, her Majesty having remarked that Mr. Gladstone was not inclined to recommend a dissolution of parliament, Mr. Disraeli stated that he himself would not advise her Majesty to take that step.

Viewing these paragraphs as forming the answer offered by Mr. Disraeli to the Queen, Mr. Gladstone reported to her (March 14) that 'he did not find himself able to gather their precise effect':—

The former of the two, if it stood alone, would seem to imply that Mr. Disraeli was prepared to accept office with a view to an immediate dissolution of parliament, but not otherwise; since it states that he believes himself able to form a suitable administration, but not 'to carry on your Majesty's government in the present House of Commons.' In the latter of the two paragraphs Mr. Disraeli has supposed your Majesty to have remarked that 'Mr. Gladstone was not inclined to recommend a dissolution of parliament,' and has stated that 'he himself would not advise your Majesty to take that step.' Your Majesty will without doubt remember that Mr. Gladstone tendered no advice on the subject of dissolution generally, but limited himself to comparing it with the alternative of resignation, which was the only question at issue, and stated that on the part of the cabinet he humbly submitted resignation of their offices, which they deemed to be the step most conformable to their duty. Mr. Gladstone does not clearly comprehend the bearing of Mr. Disraeli's closing words; as he could not tender advice to your Majesty either affirmatively or negatively on dissolution, without first becoming your Majesty's adviser. Founding himself upon the memorandum, Mr. Gladstone is unable to say to what extent the apparent meaning of the one paragraph is modified or altered by the other; and he is obliged to trouble your Majesty, however reluctantly, with this representation, inasmuch as a perfectly clear idea of the tenour of the reply is a necessary preliminary to his offering any remark or advice upon it; which, had it been a simple negative, he would have felt it his duty to do.

Between six and seven in the evening Colonel Ponsonby came with a letter from the Queen to the effect that Mr. Disraeli had unconditionally declined to undertake the formation of a government. In obedience to the Queen's commands Mr. Gladstone proceeded to give his view of the position in which her Majesty was placed:—

March 15.—Not being aware that there can be a question of any intermediate party or combination of parties which would be available at the present juncture, he presumes that your Majesty, if denied the assistance of the conservative or opposition party, might be disposed to recur to the services of a liberal government. He is of opinion, however, that either his late colleagues, or any statesman or statesmen of the liberal party on whom your Majesty might call, would with propriety at once observe that it is still for the consideration of your Majesty whether the proceeding which has taken place between your Majesty and Mr. Disraeli can as yet be regarded as complete. The vote of the House of Commons on Wednesday morning was due to the deliberate and concerted action of the opposition, with a limited amount of adventitious numerical aid. The division was a party division, and carried the well-known symbol of such divisions in the appointment of tellers of the opposition and government respectively. The vote was given in the full knowledge, avowed in the speech of the leader of the opposition, that the government had formally declared the measure on which the vote was impending to be vital to its existence. Mr. Gladstone humbly conceives that, according to the well-known principles of our parliamentary government, an opposition which has in this manner and degree contributed to bring about what we term a crisis, is bound to use and to show that it has used its utmost efforts of counsel and inquiry to exhaust all practicable means of bringing its resources to the aid of the country in its exigency. He is aware that his opinion on such a subject can only be of slight value, but the same observation will not hold good with regard to the force of a well-established party usage. To show what that usage has been, Mr. Gladstone is obliged to trouble your Majesty with the following recital of facts from the history of the last half century. . . . [*This apt and cogent recital the reader will find at the end of the volume, see Appendix*] . . . There is, therefore, a very wide difference between the manner in which the call of your Majesty has been met on this occasion by the leader of the opposition, and the manner which has been observed at every former juncture, including even those when the share taken by the opposition in bringing about the exigency was comparatively slight or none at all. It is, in Mr. Gladstone's view, of the utmost importance to the public welfare that the nation should be constantly aware that the parliamentary action certain or likely to take effect in the overthrow of a government; the reception and treatment of a summons from your Majesty to meet the necessity which such action has powerfully aided in creating; and again the resumption of office by those who have deliberately laid it down,—are uniformly viewed as matters of the utmost gravity, requiring time, counsel, and deliberation among those who are parties to them, and attended with serious responsibilities. Mr. Gladstone will not and does not suppose that the efforts of the opposition to defeat the government on Wednesday morning were made with a previously formed intention on their part to refuse any aid to your Majesty, if the need should arise, in

providing for the government of the country; and the summary refusal, which is the only fact before him, he takes to be not in full correspondence either with the exigencies of the case, or as he has shown, with the parliamentary usage. In humbly submitting this representation to your Majesty, Mr. Gladstone's wish is to point out the difficulty in which he would find himself placed were he to ask your Majesty for authority to inquire from his late colleagues whether they or any of them were prepared, if your Majesty should call on them, to resume their offices; for they would certainly, he is persuaded, call on him, for their own honour, and in order to the usefulness of their further service if it should be rendered, to prove to them that according to usage every means had been exhausted on the part of the opposition for providing for the government of the country, or at least that nothing more was to be expected from that quarter.

This statement, prepared after dinner, Mr. Gladstone took to Lord Granville that night (March 14). The next morning he again saw Lord Granville and Colonel Ponsonby, and despatched his statement to the Queen. 'At 2.45,' he writes to Granville:—

I saw the Queen, not for any distinct object, but partly to fill the blank before the public. H.M. was in perfect humour. She will use the whole or part of my long letter by sending it to Disraeli. She seemed quite to understand our point of view, and told me plainly what shows that the artful man *did* say, if it came back to him again at this juncture, he would not be bound by his present refusal. I said, 'But, ma'am, that is not before me.' 'But he told it to me,' she said.

The Queen sent Mr. Gladstone's long letter to Mr. Disraeli, and he replied in a tolerably long letter of his own. He considered Mr. Gladstone's observations under two heads; first, as an impeachment of the opposition for contributing to the vote against the bill, when they were not prepared to take office; second, as a charge against Mr. Disraeli himself that he summarily refused to take office without exhausting all practicable means of aiding the country in the exigency. On the first article of charge, he described the doctrine advanced by Mr. Gladstone as being 'undoubtedly sound so far as this: that for an opposition to use its strength for the express purpose of throwing out a government which it is at the time aware that it cannot replace—having that object in view and no other—would be an act of recklessness and faction that could not be too strongly condemned.' But this, he contended, could not be imputed to the conservative opposition of 1873. The Irish bill was from the first strongly objected to by a large section of the liberal party, and on the same grounds that led the conservative opposition to reject it, namely, that it sacrificed Irish education to the Roman catholic hierarchy. The party whom the bill was intended to propitiate rejected it as inadequate. If the sense of the House had been taken, irrespective of considerations of the political result of the division, not one-fourth of the House would have voted for it.

Mr. Gladstone's doctrine, Disraeli went on, amounted to this, that 'whenever a minister is so situated that it is in his power to prevent any other parliamentary leader from forming an administration likely to stand, he acquires thereby the right to call on parliament to pass whatever measures he and his colleagues think fit, and is entitled to denounce as factious the resistance to such measures. Any such claim is one not warranted by usage, or reconcilable with the freedom of the legislature. It comes to this: that he tells the House of Commons, "Unless you are prepared to put some one in my place, your duty is to do whatever I bid you." To no House of Commons has language of this kind ever been addressed; by no House of Commons would it be tolerated.'

As for the charge of summary refusal to undertake government, Mr. Disraeli contented himself with a brief statement of facts. He had consulted his friends, and they were all of opinion that it would be prejudicial to the public interests for a conservative ministry to attempt to conduct business in the present House of Commons. What other means were at his disposal? Was he to open negotiations with a section of the late ministry, and waste days in barren interviews, vain applications, and the device of impossible combinations? Was he to make overtures to the considerable section of the liberal party that had voted against the government? The Irish Roman catholic gentlemen? Surely Mr. Gladstone was not serious in such a suggestion. The charge of deliberate and concerted action against the Irish bill was 'not entirely divested of some degree of exaggeration.' His party was not even formally summoned to vote against the government measure, but to support an amendment which was seconded from the liberal benches, and which could only by a violent abuse of terms be described as a party move.

On Saturday afternoon Mr. Gladstone had gone down to Cliveden, and there at ten o'clock on the Sunday evening (March 16) he received a message from the Queen, enclosing Mr. Disraeli's letter, and requesting him to say whether he would resume office. This letter was taken by Mr. Gladstone to show that 'nothing more was to be expected in that quarter,' and at eleven o'clock he sent off the messenger with his answer in the affirmative:—

March 16, 1873, 10½ P.M.—It is quite unnecessary for him to comment upon any of the statements or arguments advanced by Mr. Disraeli, as the point referred by your Majesty for him to consider is not their accuracy, sufficiency or relevancy, but simply whether any further effort is to be expected from the opposition towards meeting the present necessity. Your Majesty has evidently judged that nothing more of this kind can be looked for. Your Majesty's judgment would have been conclusive with Mr. Gladstone in the case, even had he failed to appreciate the full cogency of the reason for it: but he is bound to state that he respectfully concurs with your Majesty upon that simple

question, as one not of right but of fact. He therefore does not hesitate at once to answer your Majesty's gracious inquiry by saying that he will now endeavour to prevail upon your Majesty's late advisers generally to resume their offices, and he again places all such service as it is in his power to offer, at your Majesty's disposal. According to your Majesty's command, then, he will repair to London to-morrow morning, and will see some of the most experienced members of the late government to review the position which he regards as having been seriously unhinged by the shock of last Wednesday morning; to such an extent indeed, that he doubts whether either the administration or parliament can again be what they were. The relations between them, and the course of business laid down in the royal speech, will require to be reconsidered, or at least reviewed with care.

II

Tuesday, March 18.—[*To the Queen*] The cabinet met informally at this house [11 Carlton House Terrace] at 2 P.M., and sat till 5¼. The whole of the cabinet were ready to resume their offices. It was decided to carry on the government in the present parliament, without contemplating any particular limit of time for existence in connection with the recent vote.

Wednesday, March 19.—Went down to Windsor at midday; ¾ hour with the Queen on the resignation, the statement to-morrow, the Duke of Edinburgh's marriage, royal precedence, Tennyson's honour; also she mentioned railway accidents and an assault on a soldier, and luxury in food and dress. Dined with the Duke of Cambridge. Speaker's levee, saw Mr. Fawcett [who had been active in fomenting hostility] and other members. Then Mrs. Glyn's party.

Thursday, March 20.—H. of C. Made my explanation. Advisedly let pass Mr. Disraeli's speech without notice.

Mr. Gladstone said among other things:—

I felt reluctance personally from a desire for rest, the title to which had possibly been . . . earned by labour. Also politically, because I do not think that as a general rule the experience we have had in former years of what may be called returning or resuming governments, has been very favourable in its character. . . . The subsequent fortunes of such governments lead to the belief that upon the whole, though such a return may be the lesser of two evils, yet it is not a thing in itself to be desired. It reminds me of that which was described by the Roman general according to the noble ode of Horace:—

. . Neque amissos colores
Lana refert medicata fuco,
Nec vera virtus cum semel excidit
Curat reponi deterioribus.[1]

Mr. Disraeli made a lengthy statement, covering a much

[1] *Carm.* iii. 5, 27. In Mr. Gladstone's own translation, *The Odes of Horace* (p. 84):—

. . . Can wool repair
The colours that it lost when soaked with dye?
Ah, no. True merit once resigned,
No trick nor feint will serve as well.

A rendering less apt for this occasion finds favour with some scholars, that true virtue can never be restored to those who have once fallen away from it.

wider field. The substance of the whole case after all was this. The minister could not dissolve for the reason that the defeat had strengthened all the forces against the bill and against the government, and the constituencies who had never looked on it with much favour after its rejection by the Irish to satisfy whom it had been invented, now regarded it with energetic disfavour. The leader of the opposition, on the other hand, produced a long string of ingenious reasons for not abiding by the result of what was his own act: as, for example, that dissolution could not be instant; to form a government would take time; financial business must be arranged; a policy could not be shaped without access to official information; in this interval motions would be made and carried on plausible questions, and when the election came, his friends would go to the country as discredited ministers, instead of being a triumphant opposition. In writing to his brother Robertson, Mr. Gladstone glances at other reasons:—

March 21.—We have gone through our crisis; and I fear that nobody is much the better for it. For us it was absolutely necessary to show that we did not consider return, as we had not considered resignation, a light matter. As to the opposition, the speech of Disraeli last night leaves it to be asked why did he not come in, wind up the business of the session, and dissolve? There is no reason to be given, except that a portion of his party was determined not to be educated again, and was certain that if he got in he would again commence this educating process. The conservative party will never assume its natural position until Disraeli retires; and I sometimes think he and I might with advantage pair off together.

Speaker Brand says: 'Disraeli's tactics are to watch and wait, not showing his hand nor declaring a policy; he desires to drive Gladstone to a dissolution, when he will make the most of Gladstone's mistakes, while he will denounce a policy of destruction and confiscation, and take care to announce no policy of his own. His weakness consists in the want of confidence of some of his party.'

CHAPTER XIII

LAST DAYS OF THE MINISTRY

(*1873*)

ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις ναύκληρον πάντ' ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ πράξαντα, καὶ κατασκευάσαντα τὸ πλοῖον ἀφ' ὧν ὑπελάμβανε σωθήσεσθαι, εἶτα χειμῶνι χρησάμενον καὶ πονησάντων αὐτῷ τῶν σκευῶν ἢ καὶ συντριβέντων ὅλως, τῆς ναυαγίας αἰτιῷτο.
—DEMOSTHENES.

As if, when a shipmaster had done all he could for safety, and fitted his vessel with everything to make her weathertight, then when he meets a storm and all his tackle strains and labours until it is torn to pieces, we should blame him for the wreck.

THE shock of defeat, resignation, and restoration had no effect in lessening ministerial difficulties. The months that followed make an unedifying close to five glorious years of progress and reform. With plenty of differences they recall the sunless days in which the second administration of the younger Pitt ended that lofty career of genius and dominion. The party was divided, and some among its leaders were centres of petty disturbance. In a scrap dated at this period Mr. Gladstone wrote:—'Divisions in the liberal party are to be seriously apprehended from a factious spirit on questions of economy, on questions of education in relation to religion, on further parliamentary change, on the land laws. On these questions generally my sympathies are with what may be termed the advanced party, whom on other and general grounds I certainly will never head nor lead.'

The quarrel between the government and the nonconformists was not mitigated by a speech of Mr. Gladstone's against a motion for the disestablishment of the church. It was described by Speaker Brand as 'firm and good,' but the dissenters, with all their kindness for the prime minister, thought it firm and bad.[1] To Dr. Allon, one of the most respected of their leaders, Mr. Gladstone wrote (July 5):—

[1] He said he had once made a computation of what property the church would acquire if disestablished on the Irish terms, and he made out that 'between life incomes, private endowments, and the value of fabrics and advowsons, something like ninety millions would have to be given in the process of disestablishment to the

The spirit of frankness in which you write is ever acceptable to me. I fear there may be much in your sombre anticipations. But if there is to be a great schism in the liberal party, I hope I shall never find it my duty to conduct the operations either of the one or of the other section. The nonconformists have shown me great kindness and indulgence; they have hitherto interpreted my acts and words in the most favourable sense; and if the time has come when my acts and words pass beyond the measure of their patience, I contemplate with repugnance, at my time of life especially, the idea of entering into conflict with them. A political severance, somewhat resembling in this a change in religion, should at most occur not more than once in life. At the same time I must observe that no one has yet to my knowledge pointed out the expressions or arguments in the speech, that can justly give offence.

A few personal jottings will be found of interest:—

April 7, 1873.—H. of C. The budget and its reception mark a real onward step in the session. 23.—Breakfast with Mr. C. Field to meet Mr. Emerson. 30.—I went to see the remains of my dear friend James Hope. Many sad memories but more joyful hopes. *May* 15.—The King and Queen of the Belgians came to breakfast at ten. A party of twenty. They were most kind, and all went well.

To the Queen (*May* 19).—Mr. Gladstone had an interview yesterday at Chiselhurst with the Empress. He thought her Majesty much thinner and more worn than last year, but she showed no want of energy in conversation. Her Majesty felt much interest, and a little anxiety, about the coming examination of the prince her son at Woolwich.

June 8.—Chapel royal at noon. It was touching to see Dean Hook and hear him, now old in years and very old I fear in life; but he kindled gallantly. 17.—Had a long conversation with Mr. Holloway (of the pills) on his philanthropic plans; which are of great interest. 25.—Audience of the Shah with Lord Granville and the Duke of Argyll. Came away after 1¼ hours. He displayed abundant acuteness. His gesticulation particularly expressive. 26.—Sixteen to breakfast. Mme. Norman Neruda played for us. She is also most pleasing in manner and character. Went to Windsor afterwards. Had an audience. *July* 1.—H. of C. Received the Shah soon after six. A division on a trifling matter of adjournment took place during his Majesty's presence, in which he manifested an intelligent interest. The circumstance of his presence at the time is singular in this view (and of this he was informed, rather to his amusement) that until the division was over he could not be released from the walls of the House. It is probably, or possibly, the first time for more than five hundred years that a foreign sovereign has been under personal restraint of any kind in England. [*Query, Mary Queen of Scots.*]

Then we come upon an entry that records one of the deepest griefs of this stage of Mr. Gladstone's life—the sudden death of Bishop Wilberforce:—

July 19.—Off at 4.25 to Holmbury.[1] We were enjoying that beautiful

ministers, members, and patrons of the church of England. That is a very staggering kind of arrangement to make in supplying the young lady with a fortune and turning her out to begin the world.'—*Hansard*, May 16, 1873.

[1] The house of Mr. Frederick Leveson Gower, where for many years Mr. Gladstone constantly enjoyed a hospitality in which he delighted.

spot and expecting Granville with the Bishop of Winchester, when the groom arrived with the message that the Bishop had had a bad fall. An hour and a half later Granville entered, pale and sad: 'It's all over.' In an instant the thread of that very precious life was snapped. We were all in deep and silent grief. 20.—Woke with a sad sense of a great void in the world. 21.—Drove in the morning with Lord Granville to Abinger Hall. Saw *him* for the last time in the flesh, resting from his labours. Attended the inquest; inspected the spot; all this cannot be forgotten. 23.—Gave way under great heat, hard work, and perhaps depression of force. Kept my bed all day.

'Of the special opinions of this great prelate,' he wrote to the Queen, 'Mr. Gladstone may not be an impartial judge, but he believes there can be no doubt that there does not live the man in any of the three kingdoms of your Majesty who has, by his own indefatigable and unmeasured labours, given such a powerful impulse as the Bishop of Winchester gave to the religious life of the country.' When he mentioned that the bishop's family declined the proposal of Westminster Abbey for his last resting place, the Queen replied that she was very glad, for 'to her nothing more gloomy and doleful exists.'

'Few men,' Mr. Gladstone wrote later in this very year, 'have had a more varied experience of personal friendships than myself. Among the large numbers of estimable and remarkable people whom I have known, and who have now passed away, there is in my memory an inner circle, and within it are the forms of those who were marked off from the comparative crowd even of the estimable and remarkable, by the peculiarity and privilege of their type.'[1] In this inner circle the bishop must have held a place, not merely by habit of life, which accounts for so many friendships in the world, but by fellowship in their deepest interests, by common ideals in church and state, by common sympathy in their arduous aim to reconcile greetings in the market-place and occupation of high seats, with the spiritual glow of the soul within its own sanctuary.

While still grieving over this painful loss, Mr. Gladstone suddenly found himself in a cauldron of ministerial embarrassments. An inquiry into certain irregularities at the general post office led to the discovery that a sum of eight hundred thousand pounds had been detained on its way to the exchequer, and applied to the service of the telegraphs. The persons concerned in the gross and unexcused irregularities were Mr. Monsell, Mr. Ayrton, and the chancellor of the exchequer. 'There probably have been times,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to the Queen (Aug. 7), 'when the three gentlemen who in their several positions have been chiefly to blame would have been summarily dismissed from your Majesty's service. But on none of them could any ill-intent be charged; two of them had, among

[1] *Life of Hope-Scott*, ii. p. 284.

whatever errors of judgment, done much and marked good service to the state.' Under the circumstances he could not resort to so severe a course without injustice and harshness. 'The recent exposures,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Russell, 'have been gall and wormwood to me from day to day.' 'Ever since the failure of the Irish University bill,' he said, 'the government has been in a condition in which, to say the least, it has had no strength to spare, and has stood in need of all the strength it could derive from internal harmony and vigorous administration.' The post office scandal exposed to the broad light of day that neither harmony nor vigour existed or could be counted on. It was evident that neither the postmaster nor the chancellor of the exchequer could remain where they were. In submitting new arrangements to the Queen, Mr. Gladstone said that he would gladly have spared her the irksome duty of considering them, had it been 'in his power either on the one side to leave unnoticed the scandals that have occurred, or on the other to have tendered a general resignation, or to have advised a dissolution of parliament.' The hot weather and the lateness of the session made the House of Commons disinclined for serious conflict; still at the end of July various proceedings upon the scandals took place, which Mr. Gladstone described to the Queen as of 'a truly mortifying character.' Mr. Ayrton advanced doctrines of ministerial responsibility that could not for a moment be maintained, and Mr. Gladstone felt himself bound on the instant to disavow them.[1]

Sir Robert Phillimore gives a glimpse of him in these evil days :—

July 24.—Gladstone dined here hastily; very unwell, and much worn. He talked about little else than Bishop Wilberforce's funeral and the ecclesiastical appeals in the Judicature bill. 29th.—Saw Gladstone, better but pale. Said the government deserved a vote of censure on Monsell and Lowe's account. Monsell ought to resign; but Lowe, he said, ought for past services to be defended. 30th.—Dined at Gladstone's. Radical M.P.'s . . . agreed that government was tottering, and that Gladstone did everything. Gladstone walks with a stick. *Aug.* 7.—An interview with Gladstone. He was communicative. A great reform of his government has become necessary. The treasury to be swept out. He looked much better.

Nothing at any time was so painful, almost intolerably painful, to Mr. Gladstone as personal questions, and cabinet reconstruction is made up of personal questions of the most trying and invidious kind. 'I have had a fearful week,' he wrote to the Duke of Argyll (Aug. 8), 'but have come through. A few behave oddly, most perfectly well, some incomparably

[1] Rising as soon as Mr. Ayrton sat down he said that his colleague had not accurately stated the law of ministerial responsibility. He then himself laid down its true conditions under the circumstances, with the precision usual to him in such affairs. This was one of the latest performances of the great parliament of 1868.—July 30, *Hansard*, 217, p. 1265.

well; of these last I must name *honoris causâ*, Bright, Bruce, and F. Cavendish.' To Mr. Bright he had written when the crisis first grew acute:—

Aug. 2.—You have seen the reports, without doubt, of what has been going on. You can hardly conceive the reality. I apprehend that the House of Commons by its abstinence and forbearance, must be understood to have given us breathing time and space to consider what can be done to renovate the government in something like harmony and something like dignity. This will depend greatly upon men and partly upon measures. Changes in men there must be, and some without delay. A lingering and discreditable death, after the life we have lived, is not an ending to which we ought to submit without effort; and as an essential part of the best effort that can be made, I am most desirous to communicate with you here. I rely on your kindness to come up. Here only can I show you the state of affairs, which is most dangerous, and yet not unhopeful.

From the diary:—

Aug. 1.—Saw Lord F. Cavendish, also Lord Granville, Lord Wolverton, Mr. Cardwell, repeatedly on the crisis. 2.—An anxious day. The first step was taken, Cardwell broke to Lowe the necessity of his changing his office. Also I spoke to Forster and Fortescue. 4.—A very anxious day of constant conversation and reflection, ending with an evening conclave. 5.—My day began with Dr. Clark. Rose at eleven. . . . Wrote. . . . Most of these carried much powder and shot. Some were Jack Ketch and Calcraft [the public executioner] letters. 6.—Incessant interviews. . . . Much anxiety respecting the Queen's delay in replying. Saw Lord Wolverton late with her reply. 9.—To Osborne. A long and satisfactory audience of H.M. Attended the council, and received a third time the seals of my old office.

This resumption of the seals of the exchequer, which could no longer be left with Mr. Lowe, was forced upon Mr. Gladstone by his colleagues. From a fragmentary note, he seems to have thought of Mr. Goschen for the vacant post, 'but deferring to the wishes of others,' he says, 'I reluctantly consented to become chancellor of the exchequer.' The latest instances of a combination of this office with that of first lord of the treasury were Canning in 1827, and Peel in 1834-5.[1]

[1] The following changes were made in the cabinet:—Lord Ripon (president of the council) and Mr. Childers (chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster) retired. Mr. Bright succeeded Mr. Childers, Mr. Bruce (home secretary, created Lord Aberdare) Lord Ripon. Mr. Lowe became home secretary, and Mr. Gladstone chancellor of the exchequer in union with the office of first lord. The minor changes were numerous. Mr. Monsell was succeeded at the post office by Dr. Lyon Playfair; Mr. Ayrton was made judge advocate-general, and Mr. Adam took his place as commissioner of public works; Mr. Baxter retired from the treasury, Mr. Dodson becoming financial, and Mr. A. Peel parliamentary secretaries to the treasury; Lord F. Cavendish and Mr. A. Greville were appointed lords of the treasury. On Coleridge being appointed chief justice of common pleas, and Sir George Jessel master of the rolls, they were succeeded by Mr. Henry James as attorney-general and Mr. Vernon Harcourt as solicitor-general. 'We have effectually extracted the brains from below the gangway,' Lord Aberdare wrote, Nov. 19, 1873, 'Playfair, Harcourt, James, and Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, who is Lowe's private secretary, being gone, will leave Fawcett all alone, for Trevelyan does not share his ill-will towards the government.'

The correspondence on this mass of distractions is formidable, but, luckily for us it is now mere burnt-out cinder. The two protagonists of discord had been Mr. Lowe and Mr. Ayrton, and we may as well leave them with a few sentences of Mr. Gladstone upon the one, and to the other :—

Mr. Ayrton, he says, has caused Mr. Gladstone so much care and labour on many occasions, that if he had the same task to encounter in the case of a few other members of the cabinet, his office would become intolerable. But before a public servant of this class can properly be dismissed, there must be not only a sufficient case against him, but a case of which the sufficiency can be made intelligible and palpable to the world. Some of his faults are very serious, yet he is as towards the nation an upright, assiduous, and able functionary.

To Mr. Lowe, who had become home secretary, he writes (Aug. 13) :—

I do not know whether the word 'timid' was the right one for L——, but, at any rate, I will give you proof that I am not 'timid'; though a coward in many respects I may be. I always hold that politicians are the men whom, as a rule, it is most difficult to comprehend, *i.e.* understand completely; and for my own part, I never have thus understood, or thought I understood, above one or two, though here and there I may get hold of an isolated idea about others. Such an idea comes to me about you. I think the clearness, power, and promptitude of your intellect are in one respect a difficulty and a danger to you. You see everything in a burning, almost a scorching light. The case reminds me of an incident some years back. Sir D. Brewster asked me to sit for my photograph in a black frost and a half mist in Edinburgh. I objected about the light. He said, 'This is the best light; it is all diffused, not concentrated.' Is not your light too much concentrated? Does not its intensity darken the surroundings? By the surroundings, I mean the relations of the thing not only to other things but to persons, as our profession obliges us constantly to deal with persons. In every question flesh and blood are strong and real even if extraneous elements, and we cannot safely omit them from our thoughts.

Now, after all this impudence, let me try and do you a little more justice. You have held for a long time the most important office of the state. No man can do his duty in that office and be popular *while* he holds it. I could easily name the two worst chancellors of the exchequer of the last forty years; against neither of them did I ever hear a word while they were in (I might almost add, nor for them after they were out). 'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you.' You have fought for the public, tooth and nail. You have been under a storm of unpopularity; but not a fiercer one than I had to stand in 1860, when hardly any one dared to say a word for me; but certainly it was one of my best years of service, even though bad be the best. Of course, I do not say that this necessity of being unpopular should induce us to raise our unpopularity to the highest point. No doubt, both in policy and in Christian charity, it should make us very studious to mitigate and abate the causes as much as we can. This is easier for you than it was for me, as your temper is good, and mine not good.

While I am fault-finding, let me do a little more, and take another

scrap of paper for the purpose. (I took only a scrap before, as I was determined, then, not to 'afflict you above measure.') I note, then, two things about you. Outstripping others in the race, you reach the goal or conclusion before them; and, being there, you assume that they are there also. This is unpopular. You are unpopular this very day with a poor wretch, whom you have apprised that he has lost his seat, and you have not told him *how*. Again, and lastly, I think you do not get up all things, but allow yourself a choice, as if politics were a flower-garden and we might choose among the beds; as Lord Palmerston did, who read foreign office and war papers, and let the others rust and rot. This, I think, is partially true, I do not say of your reading, but of your mental processes. You will, I am sure, forgive the levity and officiousness of this letter for the sake of its intention and will believe me always and sincerely yours.

Then at last he escaped from Downing Street to Hawarden:—

Aug. 11.—Off at 8.50 with a more buoyant spirit and greater sense of relief than I have experienced for many years on this, the only pleasant act of moving to me in the circuit of the year. This gush is in proportion to the measure of the late troubles and anxieties.

II

The reader will perhaps not thank me for devoting even a short page or two to a matter that made much clatter of tongue and pen in its day. The points are technical, minute, and to be forgotten as quickly as possible. But the thing was an episode, though a trivial one enough, in Mr. Gladstone's public life, and paltry use was made of it in the way of groundless innuendo. Being first lord of the treasury, he took besides the office of chancellor of the exchequer. Was this a fresh acceptance of a place of profit under the crown? Did he thereby come within the famous statute of Anne and vacate his seat? Or was he protected by a provision in the Act of 1867, to the effect that if any member had been duly re-elected since his acceptance of any office referred to in the Act of Anne, he should be free to accept any other such office without further re-election? Mr. Gladstone had been re-elected after being first lord of the treasury; was he free to accept the office of chancellor of the exchequer in addition, without again submitting himself to his constituents? The policy and object of the provision were obvious and they were notorious. Unluckily, for good reasons not at all affecting this object, Mr. Disraeli inserted certain words, the right construction of which in our present case became the subject of keen and copious contention. The section that had been unmistakable before, now ran that a member holding an office of profit should not vacate his seat by his subsequent acceptance of any other office '*in lieu of and in immediate succession* the one to the other.'[1] Not a word was said in the debate on the clause as to the accumulation of offices,

[1] 30 and 31 Vict. cap. 102, sec. 52, and schedule H.

and nobody doubted that the intention of parliament was simply to repeal the Act of Anne, in respect of change of office by existing ministers. Was Mr. Gladstone's a case protected by this section? Was the Act of 1867, which had been passed to limit the earlier statute, still to be construed in these circumstances as extending it?

Unsuspected hares were started in every direction. What is a first lord of the treasury? Is there such an office? Had it ever been named (up to that time) in a statute? Is the chancellor of the exchequer, besides being something more, also a commissioner of the treasury? If he is, and if the first lord is only the same, and if there is no legal difference between the lords of the treasury, does the assumption of the two parts by one minister constitute a case of immediate succession by one commissioner to another, or is the minister in Mr. Gladstone's circumstances an indivisible personality as commissioner discharging two sets of duties? Then the precedents. Perceval was chancellor of the exchequer in 1809, when he accepted in addition the office of first lord with an increased salary, and yet he was held not to have vacated his seat.[1] Lord North in 1770, then chancellor of the exchequer, was appointed first lord on the resignation of the Duke of Grafton, and he at the same time retained his post of chancellor; yet no writ was ordered, and no re-election took place.

Into this discussion we need not travel. What concerns us here is Mr. Gladstone's own share in the transaction. The plain story of what proved a complex affair, Mr. Gladstone recounted to the Speaker on August 16, in language that shows how direct and concise he could be when handling practical business:—

I had already sent you a preliminary intimation on the subject of my seat for Greenwich, before I received your letter of the 14th. I will now give you a more complete account of what has taken place. Knowing only that the law had been altered with the view of enabling the ministers to change offices without re-election, and that the combination of my two offices was a proper and common one, we had made no inquiry into the point of law, nor imagined there was any at the time when, deferring to the wish of others, I reluctantly consented to become C. of E. On Saturday last (Aug. 9) when I was at Osborne, the question was opened to me. I must qualify what I have stated by saying that on Friday afternoon some one had started the question fully into view; and it had been, on a summary survey, put aside. On Monday I saw Mr. Lambert, who I found had looked into it; we talked of it fully; and he undertook to get the materials of a case together. The Act throws the initiative upon me; but as the matter seemed open to discussion, I felt that I must obtain the best assistance, viz., that of the law officers. I advisedly abstained from troubling or consulting Sir E. May, because you might have a subsequent and separate part to take, and might wish to refer to him. Also the blundering in the newspapers showed that the question

[1] Sir Spencer Walpole thinks that Perceval's case (*Life of Perceval*, ii. p. 55) covered Mr. Gladstone. In its constitutional aspect this is true, but the Act of 1867 introduced technical difficulties that made a new element.

abounded in nice matter, and would be all the better understood from a careful examination of precedents. The law officers were out of town; but the solicitor-general [Jessel] was to come up in the later part of the week. It was not possible in so limited a time to get a case into perfect order; still I thought that, as the *adverse* argument lay on the surface, I had better have him consulted. I have had no direct communication with him. But Mr. Lambert with his usual energy put together the principal materials, and I jotted down all that occurred to me. Yesterday Mr. Lambert and my private secretary, Mr. Gurdon, who, as well as the solicitor to the treasury, had given attention to the subject, brought the matter fully before the solicitor-general. He has found himself able to write a full opinion on the questions submitted to him:— 1. My office as C. of E. is an office of profit. 2. My commissionership of the treasury under the new patent in preparation is an 'other office' under the meaning of the late Act. 3. I cannot be advised to certify to you any avoidance of the seat. Had the opinion of Sir G. Jessel been adverse, I should at once have ceased to urge the argument on the Act, strong as it appears to me to be; but in point of form I should have done what I now propose to do, viz., to have the case made as complete as possible, and to obtain the joint opinion of the law officers. Perhaps that of the chancellor should be added. Here ends my narrative, which is given only for your information, and to show that I have not been negligent in this matter, the Act requiring me to proceed 'forthwith.'

Speaker Brand replied (Aug. 18) that, while speaking with reserve on the main point at issue, he had no hesitation in saying that he thought Mr. Gladstone was taking the proper course in securing the best legal advice in the matter. And he did not know what more could be done under present circumstances.

The question put to Jessel was 'Whether Mr. Gladstone, having accepted the office of chancellor of the exchequer is not, under the circumstances stated, protected by the provision contained in section 52 of the Representation of the People Act, 1867, from vacating his seat?' Jessel answered, 'I am of opinion that he is so protected.' 'I may be wrong,' this strong lawyer once said, 'and sometimes am; but I have never any doubts.' His reasons on this occasion were as trenchant as his conclusion. Next came Coleridge, the attorney-general. He wrote to Mr. Gladstone on Sept. 1, 1873:—

I have now gone carefully through the papers as to your seat, and looked at the precedents, and though I admit that the case is a curious one, and the words of the statute not happily chosen, yet *I have come clearly and without doubt to the same conclusion as Jessel*, and I shall be quite prepared if need be to argue the case in that sense in parliament. Still it may be very proper, as you yourself suggest, that you should have a written and formal opinion of the law officers and Bowen upon it.[1]

Selborne volunteered the opposite view (Aug. 21), and did not see how it could be contended that Mr. Gladstone, being

[1] Yet Lord Selborne says that Coleridge 'must have been misunderstood'!— *Memorials*, i. pp. 328-9.

still a commissioner of the treasury under the then existing commission, took the office of the chancellor (with increase of pay) in lieu of, and in immediate succession to, the other office which he still continued to hold. A day or two later, Selborne, however, sent to Mr. Gladstone a letter addressed to himself by Baron Bramwell. In this letter that most capable judge and strong-headed man, said: 'As a different opinion is I know entertained, I cannot help saying that I think it clear Mr. Gladstone has not vacated his seat. His case is within neither the spirit nor the letter of the statute.' He then puts his view in the plain English of which he was a master. The lord advocate (now Lord Young) went with the chancellor and against the English law officers. Lowe at first thought that the seat was not vacated, and then he thought that it was. 'Sir Erskine May,' says Mr Gladstone (Feb. 2, 1874), 'has given a strong opinion that my seat is full.' Well might the minister say that he thought 'the trial of this case would fairly take as long as Tichborne.' On September 21, the chancellor, while still holding to his own opinion, wrote to Mr. Gladstone :—

> You have followed the right course (especially in a question which directly concerns the House of Commons) in obtaining the opinion of the law officers of the crown. . . . But having taken this proper course, and being disposed yourself to agree to the conclusions of your official advisers, you are clearly free from all personal fault, if you decide to act upon those conclusions and leave the House, when it meets, to deal with them in way either of assent or dissent, as it may think fit.

Coleridge and Jessel went on to the bench, and Sir Henry James and Sir William Harcourt were brought up from below the gangway to be attorney and solicitor. In November the new law officers were requested to try their hands. Taking the brilliant and subtle Charles Bowen into company, they considered the case, but did not venture (Dec. 1) beyond the singularly shy proposition that strong arguments might be used both in favour of and against the view that the seat was vacated.

Meanwhile *The Times* had raised the question immediately (Aug. 11), though not in adverse language. The unslumbering instinct of party had quickly got upon a scent, and two keen-nosed sleuth hounds of the opposition four or five weeks after Mr. Gladstone had taken the seals of the exchequer, sent to the Speaker a certificate in the usual form (Sept. 17) stating the vacancy at Greenwich, and requesting him to issue a writ for a new election. The Speaker reminded them in reply, that the law governing the issue of writs during the recess in cases of acceptance of office, required notification to him from the member accepting; and he had received no such notification.[1] Everybody knew that in case of an election, Mr. Gladstone's seat was not safe, though when the time came he was in fact

[1] 21 and 22 Vict. c. 110 (1858).

elected. The final state and the outlook could not be better described than in a letter from Lord Halifax to Mr. Gladstone (Dec. 9):—

Lord Halifax to Mr. Gladstone.

Dec. 9, 1873.—On thinking over the case as to your seat, I really think it is simple enough. I will put my ideas shortly for your benefit, or you may burn them. You did not believe that you had vacated your seat on accepting the office of chancellor of the exchequer, and you did not send notice to the Speaker as required by the Act of 1858. Were you right? The solicitor-general said that you were, in a deliberate opinion. The attorney-general concurred. The present law officers consider it so very doubtful that they will not give an opinion. The Speaker either from not having your notice, or having doubts, has not ordered a new writ. These are the facts. What should you do? *Up to the meeting* of parliament you clearly must act as if there was no doubt. If you do not, you almost admit being wrong. You must assume yourself to be right, that you are justified in the course which you have taken, and act consistently on that view. When parliament meets, I think the proper course would be for the Speaker to say that he had received a certificate of vacancy from two members, but not the notice from the member himself, and having doubts he referred the matter to the House, according to the Act. This ensures the priority of the question and calls on you to explain your not having sent the notice. You state the facts as above, place yourself in the hands of the House, and withdraw. 'I agree with what Bright said that the House of Commons will deal quite fairly in such a case. A committee will be appointed. I don't think it can last very long, and you will be absent during its sitting. No important business can be taken during your absence, and I do not know that any evil will ensue from shortening the period of business before the budget. They may vote estimates, or take minor matters.

This sensible view of Lord Halifax and Mr. Bright may be set against Lord Selborne's dogmatic assertion that a dissolution was the only escape. As for his further assertion about his never doubting that this was the determining cause of the dissolution, I can only say that in the mass of papers connected with the Greenwich seat and the dissolution, there is no single word in one of them associating in any way either topic with the other. Mr. Gladstone acted so promptly in the affair of the seat that both the Speaker of the House of Commons and Lord Selborne himself said that no fault could be found with him. His position before the House was therefore entirely straightforward. Finally Mr. Gladstone gave an obviously adequate and sufficient case for the dissolution both to the Queen and to the cabinet, and stated to at least three of his colleagues what was 'the determining cause,' and this was not the Greenwich seat, but something wholly remote from it.[1]

[1] Mr. Childers (*Life*, i. p. 220) writing after the election in 1874, says, 'It is clear to me that he would not have dissolved but for the question about the double office.' In the sentence before he says, 'Some day perhaps Gladstone will recognise his mistake

III

The autumn recess began with attendance at Balmoral, of which a glimpse or two remain :—

To Mrs. Gladstone.

Balmoral, Aug. 22, 1873.—The Queen in a long conversation asked me to-day about you at Holyhead. She talked of many matters, and made me sit down, because odd to say I had a sudden touch of my enemy yesterday afternoon, which made me think it prudent to beg off from dining with her, and keep on my back taking a strong dose of sal volatile. . . . The Queen had occasion to speak about the Crown Princess, lauded her talents, did not care a pin for her (the Queen's opinion, used to care only for that of her father. . . .

Aug. 24.—To-day I had a long talk. Nothing can be better than her humour. She is going to Fort William on the 8th. I leave on Saturday, but if I make my Highland walk it cannot be till Monday, and all next week will probably be consumed in getting me home.

Aug. 27.—I enclose a copy of my intimation to the Queen [the engagement of his eldest daughter], which has drawn forth *in a few minutes* the accompanying most charming letter from her. I think the original of this should be given to Agnes herself, as she will think it a great treasure ; we keeping a copy. Is it not a little odd on our part, more than his, that (at least so far as I am concerned) we have allowed this great Aye to be said, without a single word on the subject of the means of support forthcoming? It is indeed a proceeding worthy of the times of the Acts of the Apostles ! You perhaps know a little more than I do. *Your* family were not very worldly minded people, but you will remember that before our engagement, Stephen was spirited up, most properly, to put a question to me about means. Yesterday I was not so much struck at hearing nothing on the subject of any sublunary particular ; but lo ! again your letter of to-day arrives with all about the charms of the orphanage, but not a syllable on beef and mutton, bread and butter, which after all cannot be altogether dispensed with.

Of this visit Lord Granville wrote to him (Sept. 20) :—'The Queen told me last night that she had never known you so remarkably agreeable.' The journey closed with a rather marked proof of bodily soundness in a man nearly through his sixty-fourth year, thus recorded in his diary :—

Aug. 25.—[At Balmoral]. Walked thirteen miles, quite fresh. 26.—Walked 8½ miles in 2 h. 10 m. *Sept.* 1.—Off at 9.15 [from Invercauld] to Castleton and Derry Lodge, driving. From the Lodge at 11.15, thirty-three miles to Kingussie on foot. Half an hour for luncheon, ½ hour waiting for the ponies (the road so rough on the hill) : touched a carriageable road at 5, the top at 3. Very grand hill views, floods of rain on Speyside. Good hotel at Kingussie, but sorely disturbed by rats.

'Think,' he wrote to his daughter Mary from Naworth, 'of

in August.' This mistake, it appears, was going to the exchequer himself, instead of placing Mr. Childers there (p. 219). I am sure that this able and excellent man thought what he said about 'the question of the double office,' but his surmise was not quite impartial. Nor was he at the time a member of the cabinet.

my walking a good three and thirty miles last Monday, some of it the roughest ground I ever passed.' He was always wont to enjoy proofs of physical vigour, never forgetting how indispensable it is in the equipment of the politician for the athletics of public life. On his return home, he resumed the equable course of life associated with that happy place, though political consultations intruded :—

Sept. 6.—Settled down again at Hawarden, where a happy family party gathered to-day. 13.—Finished the long and sad but profoundly interesting task of my letter to Miss Hope Scott [on her father]. Also sent her father's letters (105) to her. . . . We finished cutting down a great beech. Our politicians arrived. Conversations with Bright, with Wolverton, with Granville, and with all three till long past twelve, when I prayed to leave off for the sake of the brain. 14.—Church morning and evening. . . . A stiff task for a half exhausted brain. But I cannot desist from a sacred task. Conversation with Lord Granville, Lord Wolverton, Mr. Bright. 15.—Church, 8½ A.M. Spent the forenoon in conclave till two, after a preliminary conversation with Bright. Spent the evening also in conclave, we have covered a good deal of ground. . . . Cut down the half-cut alder. 16.—Final conversation with Granville, with Wolverton, and with Bright, who went last. 18.—Wood-cutting with Herbert, then went up to Stephen's school feast, an animated and pretty scene. 21.—Read Manning's letter to Archbishop of Armagh. There is in it to me a sad air of unreality ; it is on stilts all through. 27.—Conversation with Mr. Palgrave chiefly on Symonds and the Greek mythology. . . . Cut a tree with Herbert. 28.—Conversation with Mr. Palgrave. He is tremendous, but in all other respects good and full of mental energy and activity, only the vent is rather large. 29.—Conversation with Mr. Palgrave, pretty stiff. Wood-cutting with Herbert. Wrote a rough mem. and computation for the budget of next year. I want eight millions to handle ! *Oct.* 2.—Off at 8, London at 3.

The memorial letter on the departed friend of days long past, if less rich than the companion piece upon Lord Aberdeen, is still a graceful example of tender reminiscence and regret poured out in periods of grave melody.[1] It is an example, too, how completely in the press of turbid affairs, he could fling off the load and at once awake afresh the thoughts and associations that in truth made up his inmost life.

Next came the autumn cabinets, with all their embarrassments, so numerous that one minister tossed a scrap across the table to another, 'We ought to have impeached Dizzy for not taking office last spring.' Disraeli had at least done them one service. An election took place at Bath in October. The conservative leader wrote a violent letter in support of the conservative candidate. 'For nearly five years,' said Mr. Disraeli, 'the present ministers have harassed every trade, worried every profession and assailed or menaced every class, institution, and species of property in the country. Occasion-

[1] *Memoir of Hope-Scott*, ii. p. 284.

ally they have varied this state of civil warfare by perpetrating some job which outraged public opinion, or by stumbling into mistakes which have been always discreditable and sometimes ruinous. All this they call a policy and seem quite proud of it; but the country has I think made up its mind to close this career of plundering and blundering.'[1] Mr. Gladstone described this curious outburst as 'Mr. Disraeli's incomparable stroke on our behalf,' and in fact its effect on public opinion was to send the liberal candidate to the head of the poll. But the victory at Bath stood solitary in the midst of reverses.

As for the general legislative business of the coming session, Mr. Gladstone thought it impossible to take up the large subject of the extension of the county franchise, but they might encourage Mr. Trevelyan to come forward with it on an early day, and give him all the help they could. Still the board was bare, the meal too frugal. They were afraid of proposing a change in the laws affecting the inheritance of land, or reform of London government, or a burials bill, or a county government bill. The home secretary was directed to draw up a bill for a group of difficult questions as to employers and employed. No more sentences were to be provided for Mr. Disraeli's next electioneering letter.

December was mainly spent at Hawarden. A pleasant event was his eldest daughter's marriage, of which he wrote to the Duke of Argyll:—

> The kindness of *all* from the Queen down to the cottagers and poor folks about us, has been singular and most touching. Our weather for the last fortnight has been delightful, and we earnestly hope it may hold over to-morrow. I have not yet read Renan's *Apôtres*. My opinion of him is completely dual. His life of Our Lord I thought a piece of trumpery; his work *Sur les langues sémitiques* most able and satisfactory in its manner and discussion.

The notes in the diary bring us up to the decision that was to end the great ministry:—

Dec. 1.—Dined at Mr. Forster's and went to Drury Lane to see in *Antony and Cleopatra* how low our stage has fallen. Miss K. V. in the ballet, dressed in black and gold, danced marvellously. 2.—To Windsor, and had a long audience of the Queen. Dined with H.M. Whist in evening. 3.—Castle. Prayers at 9; St. George's at 10.30. Off to Twickenham at 11.25. Visited Mr. Bohn, and saw his collection; enormous and of very great interest. Then to Pembroke Lodge, luncheon and long conversation with Lord Russell. . . . Read *The Parisians*. 6.—Packing, etc., and off to Hawarden. 13.—Walked with Stephen Glynne. I opened to him that I must give up my house at or about the expiry of the present government. 15.—Read Montalembert's *Life*; also my article of 1852 on him. Mr. Herbert (R.A.) came and I sat to him for a short time. 17.—Finished *Life* of Montalembert. It was a pure and noble career personally; in a public view unsatisfactory; the pope was a worm in the gourd all through. His oratory was great. 19.—With

[1] To Lord Grey de Wilton, Oct. 3, 1873.

Herbert set about making a walk from Glynne Cottage to W. E. G. door. 20.—Sat to Mr. Herbert. Worked on version of the 'Shield' [*Iliad*]. Worked on new path. 23.—Sat 1¾ hours to Mr. Herbert. Worked on correcting version of the Shield and finished writing it out. Read Aristophanes. 26.—24 to dinner, a large party gathered for the marriage. 27.—The house continued full. At 10.30 the weather broke into violent hail and rain. It was the only speck upon the brightness of the marriage. 29.—Sixty-four years completed to-day—what have they brought me? A weaker heart, stiffened muscles, thin hairs; other strength still remains in my frame. 31.—Still a full house. The year ends as it were in tumult. My constant tumult of business makes other tumult more sensible. . . . I cannot as I now am get sufficiently out of myself to judge myself, and unravel the knots of being and doing of which my life seems to be full.

Jan. 1, 1874.—A little *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. 2.—Tree-cutting. Read Fitzjames Stephen on *Parliamentary Government*, not wizard-like. (No. 2.) 6.—Read *The Parisians*, vol. iv., Munro's beautiful version of Gray's *Elegy*, and the Dizzy pamphlet on the crisis. 8.—Revised and sent off the long letter to Lord Granville on the political situation which I wrote yesterday. Axe work. 9.—Tree-cutting with Herbert. Sent off with some final touches my version of the Shield and preface. 10.—Mr. Burnett [his agent] died at one A.M. Requiescat. I grieve over this good and able man sincerely, apart from the heavy care and responsibility of replacing him, which must fall on me of necessity. 15.—Worked with Herbert; we finished gravelling the path. It rather strains my chest. 16.—Off to town after an early breakfast. Reached C. H. T. about 3 P.M. Saw Lord Granville and others.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DISSOLUTION

(*1874*)

. . . Cette prétendue sagacité qui se croit profonde, quand elle suppose partout des intrigues savantes, et met de petits drames arrangés à la place de la vérité. Il n'y a pas tant de préméditation dans les affaires humaines, et leur cours est plus naturel, que ne le croit le vulgaire.—GUIZOT.

The spurious sagacity that thinks itself deep, because it everywhere takes for granted all sorts of knowing intrigues, and puts little artful dramas in the place of truth. There is less premeditation in human affairs and their course is more natural than people commonly believe.

In the summer of 1873, before leaving London for Hawarden, Mr. Gladstone sent for the chairman of the board of inland revenue and for the head of the finance department of the treasury; he directed them to get certain information into order for him. His requests at once struck these experienced officers with a surmise that he was nursing some design of dealing with the income-tax. Here are two entries from his diary:—

Aug. 11, 1873.—Saw Mr. Cardwell, to whom at the war office I told in deep secrecy my ideas of the *possible* finance of next year, based upon the abolition of income-tax and sugar duties, with partial compensation from spirit and death duties. *Sept.* 29.—Wrote a rough mem. and computation for budget of next year. I want eight millions to handle!

So much for the charitable tale that he only bethought him of the income-tax, when desperately hunting for a card to play at a general election.

The prospect was dubious and dark. To Mr. Bright he wrote from Hawarden (Aug 14):—

MY DEAR BRIGHT,—(Let us bid farewell to *Misters.*) . . . As to the parliamentary future of the question of education, we had better talk when we meet. I remember your saying well and wisely how we should look to the average opinion of the party. What we want at present is a *positive* force to carry us onward as a body. I do not see that this can be got out of local taxation, or out of the suffrage (whether we *act* in that matter or not, and individually I am more yes than no), or out of education. It may possibly I think, be had out of *finance.* Of course

I cannot as yet see my way on that subject; but until it is cleared, nothing else will to me be clear. If it can be worked into certain shapes, it may greatly help to mould the rest, at least for the time. I think the effect of the reconstruction may be described as follows: First, we have you. Secondly, we have emerged from the discredit and disgrace of the exposures by an administration of mild penal justice, which will be complete all round when Monsell has been disposed of. Thirdly, we have now before us a clean stage for the consideration of measures in the autumn. We must, I think, have a good bill of fare, or none. If we differ on the things to be done, this may end us in a way at least not dishonourable. If we agree on a good plan, it must come to good, *whether* we succeed or fail with it. Such are my crude reflections, and such my outlook for the future. Let me again say how sensible I am of the kindness, friendship, and public spirit with which you have acted in the whole of this matter.

In the early part of the year his mind was drawing towards a decision of moment. On January 8, 1874, he wrote a letter to Lord Granville, and the copy of it is docketed, 'First idea of Dissolution.' It contains a full examination of the actual case in which they found themselves; it is instructive on more than one constitutional point, and it gives an entirely intelligible explanation of a step that was often imputed to injurious and low-minded motives:—

Hawarden, Jan. 8, 1874.—The signs of weakness multiply, and for some time have multiplied, upon the government, in the loss of control over the legislative action of the House of Lords, the diminution of the majority in the House of Commons without its natural compensation in increase of unity and discipline, and the almost unbroken series of defeats at single elections in the country.[1] In truth the government is approaching, though I will not say it has yet reached, the condition in which it will have ceased to possess that amount of power which is necessary for the dignity of the crown and the welfare of the country; and in which it might be a godsend if some perfectly honourable difference of opinion among ourselves on a question requiring immediate action were to arise, and to take such a course as to release us collectively from the responsibilities of office.

The general situation being thus unfavourable, the ordinary remedies are not available. A ministry with a majority, and with that majority not in rebellion, could not resign on account of adverse manifestations even of very numerous single constituencies, without making a precedent, and constitutionally a bad precedent; and only a very definite and substantive difficulty could warrant resignation without dissolution, after the proceedings of the opposition in March last, when they, or at any rate their leaders and their whips, brought the Queen into a ministerial crisis, and deserted her when there. If then we turn to consider dissolution, what would be its results? In my opinion the very best that could happen would be that we should come back with a small majority composed of Irish home rulers and a decided minority without

[1] In 1871-73 the tories gained twenty-three seats against only one gained by the liberals, in the first three years of the government nine seats had been lost and nine gained. 'Individuals may recover from even serious sickness; it does not appear to be the way with governments.'—Mr. Gladstone, *Nineteenth Century*, Sept. 1887.

them; while to me it seems very doubtful whether even with home rulers counted in, we should command a full half of the House of Commons. In a word, dissolution means either immediate death, or at the best death a little postponed, and the party either way shattered for the time. For one I am anxious to continue where we are, because I am very loath to leave the party in its present menacing condition, without having first made every effort in our power to avert this public mischief.

If I have made myself intelligible up to this point, the question that arises is, can we make out such a course of policy for the session, either in the general conduct of business, or in some departments and by certain measures, as will with reasonable likelihood reanimate some portion of that sentiment in our favour, which carried us in a manner so remarkable through the election of 1868? I discuss the matter now in its aspect towards party: it is not necessary to make an argument to show that our option can only be among things all of which are sound in principle. First, then, I do not believe that we can find this recovery of vital force in our general administration of public business. As men, notwithstanding the advantage drawn from Bright's return, the nation appears to think that it has had enough of us, that our lease is out. It is a question of measures then: can we by any measures materially mend the position of the party for an impending election? . . .

Looking to legislation, there are but three subjects which appear to me to be even capable of discussion in the view I have presented. They are local taxation, the county suffrage, and finance. I am convinced it is not in our power to draw any great advantage, as a party, from the subject of local taxation. . . . Equally strong is my opinion with respect to the party bearings of the question of the county franchise. We have indeed already determined not to propose it as a government. Had we done so, a case would have opened at once, comfortably furnished not with men opposing us on principle, like a part of those who opposed in 1866, but with the men of pretext and the men of disappointment, with intriguers and with egotists. And I believe that in the present state of opinion they would gain their end by something like the old game of playing redistribution against the franchise. . . .

Can we then look to finance as supplying what we want? This is the only remaining question. It does not admit, as yet, of a positive answer, but it admits conditionally of a negative answer. It is easy to show what will prevent our realising our design through the finance of the year. We cannot do it, unless the circumstances shall be such as to put it in our power, by the possession of a very wide margin, to propose something large and strong and telling upon both the popular mind and the leading elements of the constituency. . . . We cannot do it, without running certain risks of the kind that were run in the budget of 1853: I mean without some impositions, as well as remissions, of taxes. We cannot do it, without a continuance of the favourable prospects of harvest and of business. Lastly, we cannot do it unless we can frame our estimates in a manner to show our desire to adhere to the principles of economy which we proposed and applied with such considerable effect in 1868-70. But, subject to the fulfilment of these conditions, my opinion is that we *can* do it: can frame a budget large enough and palpably beneficial enough, not only to do much good to the country, but sensibly to lift the party in the public view and estima-

tion. And this, although a serious sum will have to be set apart, even in the present year, for the claims of local taxation. . . .

If we can get from three-quarters of a million upwards towards a million off the naval and military estimates jointly, then as far as I can judge we shall have left the country no reason to complain, and may proceed cheerily with our work; though we should not escape the fire of the opposition for having failed to maintain the level of Feb. 1870; which indeed we never announced as our ultimatum of reduction. I have had no communication with those of our colleagues who would most keenly desire reductions; I might say, with any one. . . . I will only add that I think a broad difference of opinion among us on such a question as this would be a difference of the kind which I described near the opening of this letter, as what might be in certain circumstances, however unwelcome in itself, an escape from a difficulty otherwise incapable of solution.

Let me now wind up this long story by saying that my desire in framing it has been simply to grasp the facts, and to set aside illusions which appear to me to prevail among sections of the liberal party, nowhere so much as in that section which believes itself to be the most enlightened. If we can only get a correct appreciation of the position, I do not think we shall fail in readiness to suit our action to it; but I am bound to confess myself not very sanguine, if the *best* come to the best, as to immediate results, though full of confidence, if we act aright, as to the future and early reward.

II

In notes written in the last year of his life, Mr. Gladstone adds a detail of importance to the considerations set out in the letter to Lord Granville. The reader will have observed that among the conditions required for his operation on the income-tax he names economic estimates. In this quarter, he tells us, grave difficulties arose:—

No trustworthy account of the dissolution of parliament which took place early in 1874 has ever been published. When I proposed the dissolution to the cabinet, they acceded to it without opposition, or, I think, even discussion. The actual occasion of the measure was known, I think, only to Lord Granville and Lord Cardwell with myself, it having a sufficient warrant from other sources.

In 1871, the year of the abolition of purchase and other important army reforms, I had, in full understanding with Cardwell, made a lengthened speech, in which I referred to the immediate augmentations of military expenditure which the reforms demanded, but held out to the House of Commons the prospect of compensating abatements at early dates through the operation of the new system of relying considerably upon reserves for imperial defence.

When Cardwell laid before me at the proper time, in view of the approaching session, his proposed estimates for 1874-5, I was strongly of opinion that the time had arrived for our furnishing by a very moderate reduction of expenditure on the army, some earnest of the reality of the promise made in 1871 which had been so efficacious in procuring the enlargement that we had then required. Cardwell, though not an extravagant minister, objected to my demand of (I think) £200,000.

I conferred with Granville, who, without any direct knowledge of the subject, took my side, and thought Cardwell would give way. But he continued to resist; and, viewing the age of the parliament, I was thus driven to the idea of dissolution, for I regarded the matter as virtually involving the whole question of the value of our promises, an anticipation which has proved to be correct. Cardwell entered readily into the plan of dissolving, and moreover thought that if my views carried the day with the constituencies, this would enable him to comply.

The papers in my hands confirm Mr. Gladstone's recollection on this part of the transaction, except that Mr. Goschen, then at the head of the admiralty, was to some extent in the same position as Mr. Cardwell. The prime minister was in active controversy with both the great spending departments, and with little chance of prevailing. It was this controversy that opened the door for immediate dissolution, though the general grounds for dissolution at some near time were only too abundant. Here is his note of the position,—in a minute addressed to Mr. Cardwell and Mr. Goschen:—

Jan. 22, 1874.—We arrived yesterday at the conclusion that, apart from this or that shade of view as to exact figure of the estimates, the measure now proposed stood well on its own general grounds. This being so, after consulting Lord Granville, and indeed at his suggestion, I have in a preparatory letter to the Queen founded myself entirely on general grounds. This being so, I would propose to consider the point raised between us as one adjourned, though with a perfect knowledge in each of our minds as to the views of the others. My statement to the cabinet must be on the same basis as my statement to the Queen. The actual decision of the estimates would stand over from to-morrow's cabinet, until we saw our way as to their position and as to the time for their production. I am sure I might reckon on your keeping the future as far as possible open, and unprejudiced by contracts for works or for building or construction. Any reference to economy which I make to-morrow will be in general terms such as I propose to use in an address. If I have made myself clear and you approve, please to signify it on this paper, or to speak to me as you may prefer. I am reluctant to go out, with my chest still tender, in the fog.

Cardwell, in the few words of his minute in reply makes no objection. Mr. Goschen says: 'I quite take the same view as you do. Indeed, I had proposed myself to ask you whether what had passed between us had not better remain entirely confidential for the present, as it is best not to state differences where the statement of them is not indispensable.'

The diary for these important days is interesting:—

Jan. 17, '74.—The prospects of agreement with the two departments on estimates are for the present bad. 18.—This day I thought of dissolution. Told Bright of it. In evening at dinner told Granville and Wolverton. All seemed to approve. My first thought of it was as an escape from a difficulty. I soon saw on reflection that it was the best thing in itself. 19.—Confined all day in bed with tightness on the chest. Much physicking. 20.—Bed all day. I spent the chief part of the day

and evening in reflection on our 'crisis,' and then in preparing a letter to go to the Queen for her information at once, and a long address for an unnamed constituency—almost a pamphlet—setting out the case of the government in an immediate appeal to the country. 21.—Altered and modified letter to the Queen, which went off. Came down at two. Much conversation to-day on the question of my own seat. 23.—Cabinet 12¾-4. Address further amended there on partial perusal. In evening corrected proofs of address, which runs well. A very busy stirring day of incessant action.

In the letter of Jan. 21 to the Queen, Mr. Gladstone recapitulates the general elements of difficulty, and apprises her Majesty that it will be his duty at the meeting of the cabinet fixed for the 23rd, to recommend his colleagues humbly and dutifully to advise an immediate dissolution, as the best means of putting an end to the disadvantage and the weakness of a false position. He trusts that the Queen may be pleased to assent. The Queen (Jan. 22) acknowledged the receipt of his letter 'with some surprise,' as she had understood him to say when last at Windsor that he did not think of recommending a dissolution until the end of the session or later. But she expressed her 'full appreciation of the difficulties of Mr. Gladstone's position,' and assented, thinking that 'in the present circumstances it would be desirable to obtain an expression of the national opinion.'

The next day (23rd) the cabinet met, and Mr. Gladstone in the evening reported the proceedings to the Queen :—

To the Queen.

Jan. 23, 1874.—. . . Mr. Gladstone laid before the cabinet a pretty full outline of the case as to the weakness of the government since the crisis of last March, and the increase of that weakness, especially of late, from the unfavourable character of local indications; as to the false position in which both the crown and the House of Commons are placed when there can be no other government than the one actually existing; finally, as to the present calls of business and prospects of the country, especially as to its finance, which are such as in Mr. Gladstone's judgment, to warrant the presentation of a very favourable picture of what may be effected with energy and prudence during the present year. In this picture is included, as Mr. Gladstone on Wednesday intimated might be the case, the total repeal of the income-tax. The cabinet unanimously concurred, upon a review of its grounds, in the wisdom of the proposed measure. It is as yet profoundly secret, but to-morrow morning it will be placed before the world with a lengthened and elaborate exposition, in the shape of an address from Mr. Gladstone to his constituents at Greenwich. There can be no doubt that a large portion of the public will at first experience that emotion of surprise which your Majesty so very naturally felt on receiving Mr. Gladstone's letter. But, judging from such indications as have reached them, the cabinet are disposed to anticipate that this course will be approved by all those who are in any degree inclined to view their general policy with sympathy or favour. Large portions, and the most important portions, of Mr. Gladstone's

address were read to and considered by the cabinet, and it was in some respects amended at the suggestion of his esteemed colleagues. It is, however, so framed as not to commit them equally with himself, except only as to the remissions of taxes and aid to local rates contemplated in the finance of the year. This method of stating generally the case of the government in substance corresponds to the proceedings of Sir R. Peel in 1834-5, when he addressed the electors of Tamworth. Before concluding, Mr. Gladstone will humbly offer to your Majesty a brief explanation. When he last adverted to the duration of the present parliament, his object was to remind your Majesty of the extreme point to which that duration might extend. When he had the honour of seeing your Majesty at Windsor,[1] the course of the local elections had been more favourable, and Mr. Gladstone had not abandoned the hope of retaining sufficient strength for the due conduct of affairs in the present House. On this question, the events of the last few weeks and the prospects of the present moment have somewhat tended to turn the scale in his mind and that of his colleagues.[2] But finally it was not within his power, until the fourth quarter of the financial year had well begun, to forecast the financial policy and measures which form a necessary and indeed the most vital part of the matter to be stated to the public. Immediately after he had been able sufficiently to ripen his own thoughts on the matter, he did not scruple to lay them before your Majesty; and your Majesty had yourself in one sense contributed to the present conclusion by forcibly pointing out to Mr. Gladstone on one or more occasions that in the event of difficulty, under the present peculiar circumstances, no alternative remained except a dissolution. The mild weather is very favourable to Mr. Gladstone, and if as he has prayed there shall be a council on Monday, he hopes to have the honour of coming down to Osborne.

To his eldest son he wrote on the following day:—

We here of the cabinet[3] and the whips are in admirable spirits. We dissolve on Finance. The surplus will be over five millions. We promise as in our judgment practicable,—1. Pecuniary aid to local taxation, but with reform of it. 2. Repeal of the income-tax. 3. Some great remission in the class of articles of consumption. (This last remission probably means sugar, but nothing is to be said by any member of the government as to choice of the article.) We make it a question of confidence on the *prospective* budget. As far as we can judge, friends will much approve our course, although for the public there may at first be surprise, and the enemy will be furious.

III

The prime minister's manifesto to his constituents at Greenwich was elaborate and sustained. In substance it did no more than amplify the various considerations that he had set forth in his letter to Lord Granville. The pith of it was a

[1] Dec. 2, 1873.

[2] The conservatives had gained a seat at Stroud on Jan. 6, and greatly reduced the liberal majority at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

[3] 'The continual loss of elections,' Lord Aberdare wrote to his wife, 'and the expediency of avoiding being further weakened in detail, have determined us to take at once the opinion of the country, and to stand or fall by it. I am rejoiced at this resolution.'—*Aberdare Papers*, Jan. 23, 1874.

promise to diminish local taxation, and to repeal the income-tax. At the same time marked relief was to be given to the general consumer in respect of articles of popular consumption. One effective passage dealt with the charge that the liberal party had endangered the institutions of the country. 'It is time,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'to test this trite and vague allegation. There has elapsed a period of forty, or more exactly forty-three years, since the liberal party acquired the main direction of public affairs. This followed another period of about forty years beginning with the outbreak of the revolutionary war, during which there had been an almost unbroken rule of their opponents, who claimed and were reputed to be the great preservers of the institutions of the country.' He then invited men to judge by general results, and declared that the forty years of tory rule closing in 1830 left institutions weaker than it had found them, whereas the liberal term of forty years left throne, laws, and institutions not weaker but much stronger. The address was a fine bold composition, but perhaps it would have been more effective with a public that was impatient and out of humour, if it had been shorter.

The performance was styled by his rival 'a prolix narrative,' but it is said that in spite of this Mr. Disraeli read it with much alarm. He thought its freshness and boldness would revive Mr. Gladstone's authority and carry the elections. His own counter manifesto was highly artificial. He launched sarcasms about the Greenwich seat, about too much energy in domestic legislation, and too little in foreign policy; about an act of folly or of ignorance rarely equalled in dealing with the straits of Malacca (though for that matter not one elector in a hundred thousand had ever heard of this nefarious act). While absolving the prime minister himself, 'certainly at present,' from hostility to our national institutions and the integrity of the empire, he drew a picture of unfortunate adherents—some assailed the monarchy, others impugned the independence of the House of Lords, while others would relieve parliament altogether from any share in the government of one portion of the United Kingdom; others, again, urged Mr. Gladstone to pursue his peculiar policy by disestablishing the anglican as he has despoiled the Irish church; even trusted colleagues in his cabinet openly concurred with them in their desire altogether to thrust religion from the place which it ought to occupy in national education. What is remarkable in Disraeli's address is that to the central proposal of his adversary he offered no objection. As for remission of taxation, he said, that would be the course of any party or any ministry. As for the promise of reduced local burdens and the abolition of the income-tax, why, these 'were measures which the conservative party have always favoured and which the prime minister and his friends have always opposed.'

By critics of the peevish school who cry for better bread than can be made of political wheat, Mr. Gladstone's proffer to do away with the income-tax has been contumeliously treated as dangling a shameful bait. Such talk is surely pharisaic stuff. As if in 1852 Disraeli in his own address had not declared that the government would have for its first object to relieve the agricultural interest from certain taxes. Was that a bribe? As if Peel in 1834-5 had not set forth in the utmost detail all the measures that he intended to submit to parliament if the constituencies would give him a majority. Was this to drive an unprincipled bargain? As if every minister does not always go to the country on promises, and as if the material of any promise could be more legitimate than a readjustment of taxation. The proceeding was styled a sordid huckstering of a financial secret for a majority. Why was it more sordid to seek a majority for abolition of the income-tax, than it was sordid in Peel in 1841 to seek a majority for corn laws, or in whigs and Manchester men to seek to win upon free trade? Why is it an ignoble bargain to promise to remove the tax from income, and pure statesmanship to remove the tax from bread? 'Give us a majority,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'and we will do away with income-tax, lighten local burdens, and help to free the breakfast-table.' If people believed him, what better reason could they have than such a prospect as this for retaining him in the place of their chief ruler?

IV

Parliament was dissolved on January 26, and the contending forces instantly engaged. Mr. Gladstone did not spare himself:—

Jan. 26. '74.—8¾-5¾. To Osborne. Audience of H.M. who quite comprehends the provisional character of the position. . . . Boundless newspaper reading. 28.—2-5. To Greenwich. Spoke an hour to 5000. An enthusiastic meeting, but the general prospects are far from clear.[1] 31.—Woolwich meeting. The meeting disturbed by design was strangely brought round again. *Feb.* 2.—Third great meeting and speech of an hour at New Cross for Deptford. Much enthusiasm and fair order. 3.—Many telegrams and much conversation with Granville and Wolverton in the evening. The general purport was first indifferent, then bad. My own election for Greenwich after Boord the distiller, is more like a defeat than a victory, though it places me in parliament again. A wakeful night, but more I believe from a little strong coffee drunk incautiously, than from the polls, which I cannot help and have done all in my power to mend.

[1] It was an extraordinary feat for a statesman of sixty-five who had quite recently been confined to his bed with bronchitis. The day was damp and drizzly; numbers, which are variously estimated from six to seven thousand, had to be as far as possible brought within the range of his voice, and his only platform was a cart with some sort of covering, in the front of which he had to stand bareheaded.—*Spectator*, Jan. 31, 1874.

The Greenwich seat, the cause of such long perturbation, was saved after all, but as Mr. Gladstone wrote to a defeated colleague, 'In some points of view it is better to be defeated outright, than to be pitched in like me at Greenwich.' The numbers were Boord (C.) 6193, Gladstone (L.) 5968, Liardet (C.) 5561, Langley (L.) 5255.

The conservative reaction was general. Scotland and Wales still returned a liberal majority, but even in these strongholds a breach was made—a net loss of 3 in Wales, of 9 in Scotland. From the English counties 145 tories were returned, and no more than 27 liberals, a loss of 13. In the greater boroughs, hitherto regarded as staunchly ministerial, some of the most populous returned tories. The metropolitan elections went against the government, and 7 seats were lost—three in the city, one in Westminster, in both cases by immense majorities. The net liberal loss in the English boroughs was 32. In England and Wales the tory majority was 105; in Great Britain it stood at 83. When all was over, the new House contained a conservative majority of 48, or on another estimate, of 50, but really, in Mr. Gladstone's words, 'of much greater strength.'

Numbers, as Mr. Gladstone said afterwards, did not exhibit the whole measure of the calamity. An extraordinary portent arose in that quarter from which so many portents spring. 'The liberal majority reckoned to have been returned from Ireland was at once found to be illusory. Out of the 105 members the liberals were little more than a dozen. The period immediately following the Church Act and Land Act had been chosen as one appropriate for a formal severance of the Irish national party from the general body of British liberals. Their number was no less than fifty-eight, an actual majority of the Irish representation. They assumed the name of home rulers, and established a separate parliamentary organization. On some questions of liberal opinion co-operation was still continued. But, as regards the party, the weight of the home rulers clearly told more in favour of the conservative ministry than of the opposition; and the liberal party would have been stronger not weaker had the entire body been systematically absent.'[1] Before the election was over, Mr. Chichester Fortescue had warned him that he expected defeat in the county of Louth, for which he had sat ever since 1847; the defeat came. Mr. Gladstone wrote to him (Feb. 11):—

> I receive with great concern your dark prognostication of the result of the Louth election. It would be so painful in a public view with regard to the gratitude of Irishmen, that I will still hope for a better result. But with reference to the latter part of your letter, I at once write to say that in the double event of your rejection and your wish, I consider your claim to a peerage indisputable. It would be hard to name the man

[1] Mr Gladstone on Electoral Facts, *Nineteenth Century*, November 1878.

who has done for Ireland all that you have done, or any man that knew the greatest Irish questions as you know them.

Mr. Parnell, by the way, was not elected for Meath until April 1875.

V

As the adverse verdict became more and more emphatic, Mr. Gladstone stated to the Queen (Feb. 13) what was the bias of his mind, on the question whether the expiring government should await its sentence from parliament. He had no doubt, he said, that this course was the one most agreeable to usage, and to the rules of parliamentary government; any departure from it could only be justified upon exceptional grounds. He was not, however, clear that this case, like that of 1868, was to be treated as exceptional, partly by reason of prevalent opinion, partly because it should be considered what is fair to an incoming administration with reference to the business, especially the financial business, of the year. Lord Granville from the first seems to have been against waiting for formal decapitation by the new House of Commons. To him Mr. Gladstone wrote (Feb. 7):—

I presume you will answer Bismarck's kind telegram. Please to mention me in your reply or not as you think proper. As to the impending crisis of our fate, one important element, I admit, will be the feeling of the party. I have asked Peel (whose first feeling seems rather to be with you) to learn what he can. I tend to harden in my own view, principle and precedent seeming to me alike clear. There are four precedents of our own time—1835, 1841, 1852, 1859, under three ministers. The only case the other way is that of 1868 of which the circumstances were altogether peculiar. But I admit it to be very doubtful whether we should get beyond the address. On the other hand I admit freely that I have no title to press my view beyond a certain point.

'It is parliament,' he argued, 'not the constituencies, that ought to dismiss the government, and the proper function of the House of Commons cannot be taken from it without diminishing somewhat its dignity and authority.' There would be reproach either way, he said; either it would be clinging to office, or it would be running away. To run away was in every circumstance of politics the thing to Mr. Gladstone most unbearable. According to Sir Robert Phillimore (Feb. 8) 'Gladstone would have met parliament but his colleagues objected, though it seems they would have stood by him if he had pressed them to do so; but as he did not mean, or was not going, to fight in the van of opposition, he thought it unfair to press them.'

Feb. 16, '74.—Cabinet dinner 8-12. It went well. I did something towards snapping the ties and winding out of the coil. Conversation afterwards with Granville, on the flags up and down. Then with Wolverton. To bed at 1¾, but lay three hours awake (rare with me)

with an overwrought brain. . . . 17.—12½-6. Went to Windsor, and on behalf of the cabinet resigned. Took with me *Merchant of Venice* and *Thomas à Kempis*, each how admirable in its way![1] 20.—Went by 5.10 to Windsor, final audience and kissed hands. Her Majesty very kind, the topics of conversation were of course rather limited. 21.—I cleared my room in Downing Street and bade it farewell, giving up my keys except the cabinet key. 28.—Set aside about 300 vols. of pamphlets for the shambles. *March* 3.—I have given up all my keys; quitted Downing Street a week ago; not an official box remains. But I have still the daily visit of a kind private secretary; when that drops all is over. 5.—Hamilton paid me his last visit. To-morrow I encounter my own correspondence single-handed.

The Queen repeated a former proposal of a peerage. In returning some submissions for her approval, she wished 'likewise to record her offer to Mr. Gladstone of a mark of her recognition of his services which, however, he declines from motives which she fully appreciates.' Mr. Gladstone writes to his brother Sir Thomas (Feb. 13):—

Accept my best thanks for your kind note of yesterday. My reply to the Queen was first made twelve months ago when we proposed to resign simply from the failure of a great measure in H. of C. I repeated it this year with similar expressions of gratitude, but with the remark that even if my mind had been open on the question, I did not think I could have accepted anything while under that national condemnation which has been emphatically enough pronounced at the elections. I may be wrong in my view of the matter generally; but I can only judge for the best. I do not see that I am wanted or should be of use in the House of Lords, and there would be more discrepancy between rank and fortune, which is a thing on the whole rather to be deprecated. On the other hand, I know that the line I have marked out for myself in the H. of C. is one not altogether easy to hold; but I have every disposition to remain quiet there, and shall be very glad if I can do so.

VI

Letters from two of his colleagues explain the catastrophe. The shrewd Lord Halifax says to him (Feb. 12):—

As far as I can make out people are frightened—the masters were afraid of their workmen, manufacturers afraid of strikes, churchmen afraid of the nonconformists, many afraid of what is going on in France and Spain—and in very unreasoning fear have all taken refuge in conservatism. Ballot enabled them to do this without apparently deserting their principles and party. Things in this country as elsewhere are apt to run for a time in opposite directions. The reaction from the quiet of Palmerston's government gave you strength to remove four or five old-

[1] February 17, 1874.—'I was with the Queen to-day at Windsor for three-quarters of an hour, and nothing could be more frank, natural, and kind, than her manner throughout. In conversation at the audience, I of course followed the line on which we agreed last night. She assented freely to all the honours I had proposed. There was therefore no impediment whatever to the immediate and plenary execution of my commission from the cabinet; and I at once tendered our resignations, which I understand to have been graciously accepted. She left me, I have no doubt, to set about making other arrangements.'

standing abuses which nobody had ventured to touch for years. The feelings of those who suffer from the removal of abuses are always stronger than those of the general public who are benefited. Gratitude for the Reform bill and its sequel of improvements hardly gave a liberal majority in 1835, and gratitude for the removal of the Irish church, purchase, etc., has not given us a majority in 1874.

Mr. Bright wrote to him that as things had turned out, it would perhaps have been wiser first to secure the budget; with that and better organization, the result might have been better three or six months later. In Lancashire, said Bright, publicans and Irishmen had joined together, one for delirium tremens and the other for religious education. The 25th clause and Mr. Forster's obstinacy, he added, had done much to wreck the ship. Mr. Gladstone's own diagnosis was not very different. To his brother Robertson he wrote (Feb. 6):—

For many years in the House of Commons I have had more fighting than any other man. For the last five years I have had it almost all, and of it a considerable part has been against those 'independent' liberals whose characters and talents seem to be much more appreciated by the press and general public, than the characters and talents of quieter members of the party. I do not speak of such men as ——, who leave office or otherwise find occasion to vindicate their independence, and vote against us on the questions immediately concerned. These men make very little noise and get very little applause. But there is another and more popular class of independent liberals who have been represented by the *Daily News*, and who have been one main cause of the weakness of the government, though they (generally) and their organ have rallied to us too late during the election. We have never recovered from the blow which they helped to strike on the Irish Education bill.

But more immediately operative causes have determined the elections. I have no doubt what is the principal. We have been borne down in a torrent of gin and beer. Next to this has been the action of the Education Act of 1870, and the subsequent controversies. Many of the Roman catholics have voted against us because we are not denominational; and many of the dissenters have at least abstained from voting because we are. Doubtless there have been other minor agencies; but these are the chief ones. The effect must be our early removal from office. For me that will be a very great change, for I do not intend to assume the general functions of leader of the opposition, and my great ambition or design will be to spend the remainder of my days, if it please God, in tranquillity, and at any rate in freedom from political strife.

When a short idle attempt was made in the new parliament to raise a debate upon the date and circumstances of the dissolution, Disraeli used language rightly called by Mr. Gladstone 'generous.' 'The right honourable gentleman's friends,' he said, 'were silent, and I must confess I admire their taste and feeling. If I had been a follower of a parliamentary chief as eminent, even if I thought he had erred, I should have been disposed rather to exhibit sympathy than to offer criticism. I should remember the great victories which he

had fought and won; I should remember his illustrious career; its continuous success and splendour, not its accidental or even disastrous mistakes.'[1]

One word upon the place of this election in our financial history. In 1874, the prosperity of the country and the movement of the revenue gave an opportunity for repeal of the income-tax. That opportunity never recurred. The election of 1874 was the fall of the curtain; the play that had begun in 1842 came to its last scene. It marked the decision of the electorate that the income-tax—introduced in time of peace by Peel and continued by Mr. Gladstone, for the purpose of simplifying the tariff and expanding trade—should be retained for general objects of government and should be a permanent element of our finance. It marked at the same time the prospect of a new era of indefinitely enlarged expenditure, with the income-tax as a main engine for raising ways and means. Whether this decision was wise or unwise, we need not here discuss.

[1] March 19, 1874.

Book VII

(1874–1880)

CHAPTER I

RETIREMENT FROM LEADERSHIP

(1874–1875)

*

'ἐγὼ μὲν, ὦναξ, πρεσβύτερός τε ἤδη εἰμὶ καὶ βαρὺς ἀείρεσθαι· σὺ δέ τινα τῶνδε τῶν νεωτέρων κέλευε ταῦτα ποιέειν.'—HERODOTUS iv. 150.

'I am too old, O king, and slow to stir; so bid thou one of the younger men here do these things.'

A MEMBER of the great government of 1868, in a letter to one of his family, gave an account of the final meeting of the cabinet:—

Feb. 17, 1874.—I doubt—he says—whether I ever passed a more eventful evening than yesterday. The whole cabinet was assembled. We resolved after full discussion of pros and cons, and some slight difference of opinion, to resign at once. After which came the startling announcement that Gladstone would no longer retain the leadership of the liberal party, nor resume it, unless the party had settled its differences. He will not expose himself to the insults and outrages of 1866-8, and he has a keen sense of the disloyalty of the party during the last three years. He will sit as a private member and occasionally speak for himself, but he will not attend the House regularly, nor assume any one of the functions of leader. He does this not from anger, but because he says that it is absolutely necessary to party action to learn that all the duties and responsibilities do not rest on the leaders, but that followers have their obligations too. As a consequence of this Cardwell retires to the House of Lords. He will not take the leadership, nor will he consent to serve under any one but Gladstone. He is too old, he says. Lowe protests against the anarchical experiment, and talks of Hartington as leader. As neither Lowe, nor Bright, nor Goschen, nor Forster is in a position to act as leader, it may come to this, so that the liberal front benches of the two Houses will be entirely remodelled.[1]

[1] *Aberdare Papers.*

Here is Mr. Gladstone's own account, written twenty-three years later, and confirmed by all other accessible papers of the moment :—

I was most anxious to make the retirement of the ministry the occasion of my own. I had served for more than forty years. My age—65—was greater than that of Sir Robert Peel at his retirement in 1846, or at his death in 1850, and was much beyond that at which most of the leading commoners of the century had terminated their political career, together with their natural life. I felt myself to be in some measure out of touch with some of the tendencies of the liberal party, especially in religious matters. Sir A. Clark, whom I consulted, would give me on medical grounds no encouragement whatever. But I deeply desired an interval between parliament and the grave. In spite of the solicitations of my friends I persisted. For 1874 there was a sort of compromise 'without prejudice.' As having a title to some rest I was not a very regular attendant, but did not formally abdicate.

He found specific reasons for withdrawal in the state of the party (Feb. 12) :—

1. The absence of any great positive aim (the late plan [budget] having failed) for which to co-operate. 2. The difficulty of establishing united and vigorous action in the liberal party for the purposes of economy. 3. The unlikelihood of arriving at any present agreement respecting education.

In another fragment of the same date, he says :—

I do not forget that I am in debt to the party generally for kindness, indulgence, and confidence, much beyond what I have deserved. Deeming myself unable to hold it together from my present position in a manner worthy of it, I see how unlikely it is that I should hereafter be able to give any material aid in the adjustment of its difficulties. Yet if such aid should at any time be generally desired with a view to arresting some great evil or procuring for the nation some great good, my willingness to enter into counsel for the occasion would follow from all I have said. But always with the understanding that as between section and section I could not become a partisan, and that such interference even in the case of its proving useful would entail no obligation whatever on those accepting it, and carry with it no disturbance of any arrangement subsisting at the time.

The situation proved, as Lowe had foreseen, an anarchic experiment. Mr. Gladstone went up to London for the session, and followed his ordinary social course :—

March 9, 1874.—Off at 4.45 to Windsor for the fête. We dined at St. George's Hall. I was presented to the Duchess of E. by the Queen, and had a few kind words from H.M. 11.—Archbishop Manning, 9-11. It is kind in him to come, but most of it is rather hollow work, limited as we are. 16.—Dined at Marlborough House. A civil talk with Disraeli. 20.—Finished *Vivian Grey*. The first quarter extremely clever, the rest trash.

May 15.—Emperor of Russia's reception at 3.15. He thanked me for my conduct to Russia while I was minister. I assured his Majesty I had watched with profound interest the transactions of his reign, and the

great benefits he had conferred upon his people. He hoped the relations of the two countries would always be good. . . . Dined at Marlborough House. Stafford House ball afterwards. The emperor complained of the burden and late hours of evening entertainments. Princess of Wales so nice about her picture. D[israeli] complained of my absence, said they could not get on without me. 20.—Dined at the F.O. to meet the emperor. It was very kind of Derby. Much work at Hawarden in arranging books and papers.

The House of Commons is hardly attractive to an irregular and perfunctory attendant; and Mr. Gladstone's thoughts all turned to other fields. To Mrs. Gladstone he wrote early in April :—

The anti-parliamentary reaction has been stronger with me even than I anticipated. I am as far as possible from feeling the want of the House of Commons. I could cheerfully go there to do a work; but I hope and pray to be as little there as possible, except for such an aim. In London I think we were too much hustled to speak leisurely or effectually of the future. It will open for us by degrees. I shall be glad when the matter of money, after all a secondary one, is disentangled, but chiefly because it seems to put pressure upon you. I spoke to Stephen about these matters on Saturday; he was kind, reasonable, and in all ways as satisfactory as possible. There is one thing I should like you to understand clearly as to my view of things, for it is an essential part of that view. I am convinced that the welfare of mankind does not now depend on the state or the world of politics; the real battle is being fought in the world of thought, where a deadly attack is made with great tenacity of purpose and over a wide field, upon the greatest treasure of mankind, the belief in God and the gospel of Christ.

In June Sir Stephen Glynne died,—'a dark, dark day.' 'My brother-in-law,' wrote Mr. Gladstone at a later date, 'was a man of singular refinement and as remarkable modesty. His culture was high and his character one of deep interest. His memory was on the whole decidedly the most remarkable known to me of the generation and country. His life, however, was retired and unobtrusive; but he sat in parliament, I think, for about fifteen years, and was lord-lieutenant of his county.'

I thank you much—Mr. Gladstone said to the Duke of Argyll—for your kind note. Your sympathy and that of the duchess are ever ready. But even you can hardly tell how it is on this occasion needed and warranted. My wife has lost the last member of a family united by bonds of the rarest tenderness, the last representative of his line, the best of brothers, who had ever drawn closer to her as the little rank was thinned. As for me, no one can know what our personal relations were, without knowing the interior details of a long family history, and efforts and struggles in common carried on through a long series of years, which riveted into the closest union our original affection. He was a very rare man, but we grieve not for him; he sleeps the sleep of the just. The event is a great one also to the outward frame of our life here.[1]

[1] See vol. I. p. 250.

In the same letter he says it is most painful to him to be dragged into ecclesiastical turmoil, as for example by the Scotch patronage bill, which he considers precipitate, unwise, and daring, or the bill directed against the endowed schools commissioners, of whom his brother-in-law, Lord Lyttelton, was one. In the last case he acted as leader of an organized party, but in the more important instance of a bill devised, as Mr. Disraeli said, to put down ritualism, his dissent from most of those around him fulfilled all the anticipations that had pointed to retirement. The House was heartily in favour of the bill, and what is called the country earnestly supported it, though in the cabinet itself at least four ministers were strenuously hostile. Mr. Gladstone writes to his wife a trenchant account of his vigorous dealing with a prominent colleague who had rashly ventured to mark him for assault. He sent word to the two archbishops that if they carried a certain amendment he should hold himself 'altogether discharged from maintaining any longer the establishment of the church.' He wrote to Lord Harrowby when the recess came :—

I think, or rather I am convinced, that the effect *either* of one or two more ecclesiastical sessions of parliament such as the last, or of any prolonged series of contentious proceedings under the recent Act, upon subjects of widespread interest, will be to disestablish the church. I do not feel the dread of disestablishment which you may probably entertain : but I desire and seek so long as standing ground remains, to avert, not to precipitate it.

To another correspondent—

Individually I have serious doubts whether the whole of the penal proceedings taken in this country with respect to church matters from the day of Dr. Hampden downwards, have not done considerably more harm than good. There is no doubt at all that all the evils, of whatever kind, at which they were aimed, exist at this moment among us in a far more aggravated shape than when they began. . . . My object and desire has ever been and still is, to keep the church of England together, both as a church and as an establishment. As a church, I believe, she is strong enough, by virtue of the prayer-book, to hold together under all circumstances ; but as an establishment, in my opinion, she is not strong enough to bear either serious secession or prolonged parliamentary agitation.

Finally, in a letter dated from Whittinghame (Nov. 17)—

There are already too many causes of demoralisation operating upon the House of Commons. If it is also to become a debased copy of an ecclesiastical council, all the worst men and worst qualities of the worst men will come to the front, and the place will become intolerable.

Even any member of parliament who shares none of Mr. Gladstone's theology, may sympathise to the full with his deep disgust at theologic and ecclesiastical discussions as conducted in that secular air. We can easily understand how detestable he found it, and how those discussions fortified his sense of

estrangement from the ruling sentiments of the parliamentary party of which he was still the titular leader.

Of course the whigs, always for keeping a parliamentary church in its proper place, disliked his line. Liberals like Thirlwall read his speeches 'with great pain and suspicion,' and declared their confidence to be shaken. Hardly any section was completely satisfied. His mind in the autumn and winter of 1874 was absorbed, as we shall see within a few pages, in an assault upon the decrees of the Vatican Council of 1870. This assault, as he told Lord Granville (Dec. 7, 1874), while tending 'to hearten' the party generally, was against his resumption of formal leadership, because it widened the breach with the Irishmen in the House of Commons. Apart from this there were many questions, each with a group of adherents to a special view, but incapable of being pursued by common and united action. He ran through the list in writing to Lord Granville. It has historic interest:—

1. Extension of the suffrage, with redistribution of seats abreast or in the rear. 2. Disestablishment in Scotland, England. 3. Land laws. 4. Retrenchment. 5. Colonial policy, territorial extension of the empire. 6. Reform of local government taxation. 7. Secular education. 8. Undenominational education. 9. Irish affairs. On no one of these is there known to exist a plan desired by the entire party, or by any clear and decisive majority of it.

On the whole, he was persuaded that neither the party generally nor the country desired another period of active reforms, even if he were fit to conduct them. Besides this he confessed his 'apprehension that differences would spring up, and great shrinking from any breach with the party, and a determination, often expressed, never, if he could help it, to lead one branch of it against another.' In many forms he carried Lord Granville with him round the circle of his arguments. He once sent his points on half-a-dozen scraps of paper. Granville playfully replied, 'I should like to treat them as old Lord Bessborough used to treat his playing-cards when luck was adverse—tear them up into small bits and toss them in the fire.' Nothing shook him, not even Mrs. Gladstone's misgivings. To her he wrote from Carlton House Terrace on the eve of the session of 1875:—

Now for the grave matter about the leadership. I have had much conversation with Granville and Cardwell, and I am going to see Hartington, also Goschen, to-morrow. My letter is rewritten and improved, but I am obliged to stand to my conclusion, for many reasons. Among them the church reason is one of the most serious, and the other the undefined and prolonged character of the service if now undertaken. This, while arguing and deprecating, they admit I think to a great extent. Our old colleagues are inclined to come up on Thursday if they can, and this will be rather to hear than to debate. Hartington will succeed. I am indeed sorry that you and I have not been able to take the same view of this

important subject, but you know that I am acting on convictions very long entertained, and will I am sure believe that I have probed myself deeply, and used all the means in my power to get at a right conclusion. Nay, I think you will be more reconciled, when I tell you that Granville did not really see his way either to a nominal leadership, or to making any arrangement by which I could after a short time with some certainty have escaped. I saw Clark last night and this morning; he gives an excellent account of me and makes it impossible for me to plead health as my reason.

The drama went rapidly forward :—

Jan. 12.—I find that the agreement made yesterday that I should meet my former colleagues on Monday will require me to remain until this day, though after a pretty busy morning the pressure is less. I have, however, to preside in the evening at the meeting of the Metaphysical Society, and to listen, though I hope nothing more, to a tough discussion. Manning, I am sorry to say, will be there. His pamphlet is at length going to press, and will extend he says to 150 pages. Newman is not out yet.

11 *Carlton House Terrace, Jan.* 14, '75.—This great affair is nearly arranged. My old colleagues all submit under protest; and I shall be free. An article in the *Times* this morning is undisguisedly aimed at getting rid of me; but it does not express any of their feelings. We have had a morning at Granville's; Halifax, Granville, Cardwell, Hartington, Aberdare, Forster, Carlingford, Stansfeld, Selborne, Goschen, Lowe, Kimberley,—in short all, I think, except Argyll and Bright. There was argument and exhortation, and much kindness. My letter to Granville will be accompanied by a short reply from him expressing difference of opinion and regret. They are afraid of being blamed by the party if they seem to show indifference.

The Queen thanked Mr. Gladstone for communicating to her his resolution of retiring from the more active duties of parliamentary life. She was not entirely unprepared for it after what he told her himself last year. 'She knows that his zeal and untiring energy have always been exerted with the desire of advancing the welfare of the nation and maintaining the honour of the crown, and she thanks him for his loyal assurances of support on all occasions when it may become necessary.'

The Duke of Argyll wrote 'sincerely to congratulate' him upon his withdrawal. Bright on the other hand (Jan. 17) said he could not applaud, yet he would not blame: Mr. Gladstone's course seemed so unfortunate if not disastrous to the great public interests committed to him :—

'For myself,' says Bright, 'if I could have foreseen either the result of the election of last year, or your retirement from the conduct of the party, I should certainly have withdrawn from parliament, where now I seem to have quite as little of duty or of a mission as you have. The front opposition bench is full of discord, and when you are not there full of jealousy, and I find myself without any particular attraction to any particular part of the House. However, I will not complain; some door of escape may open for me, and I can become a spectator as you are proposing to be.

I hope on some occasion I may have the chance of seeing you when you come to town. I have had so much pleasure in your friendship, and have gained so much from it, that I would fain hope it need not cease now, when our association will necessarily be less frequent than it has been of late years. Whether you come back to the political field or turn wholly to study and to literature, I am sure you will be usefully employed, and I hope that nothing but blessing may rest upon all your labours.'

The feeling among liberals in the country was of deep dismay. Some of the whigs doubtless found solace in the anticipation that a new middle party might be formed, with 'a recovery of the old liberal position demolished for the time by John Mill, Gladstone, and Cobden.'[1] But this was limited to a narrow circle. 'All sunshine is gone out of politics,' was a general phrase. The news was compared by one correspondent to Gelon's message to the Greeks, that the spring was taken out of their year.[2]

An organ of the stiff nonconformists said,[3] 'Against his government we felt that we had a great grievance; for himself, the nonconformists of this country have long cherished a loyalty more fervent, we are inclined to imagine, than that with which he has been regarded by any other section of the community. He, beyond all other modern statesmen, with perhaps here and there a doubtful exception, gave us the impression of a man who regarded politics as a part of Christian duty.' And the same writers most truly added, 'We do not know what the English people have done for Mr. Gladstone that can be compared for a moment with what Mr. Gladstone has done for them. Claims on him we have none. He has far more than discharged any debt that he could have owed to the nation.' These words are a just remonstrance against the somewhat tyrannical conventions of English public life.

When the session began, he wrote to Mrs. Gladstone (Feb. 15):—'I came down to the House and took my seat nearly in the same spot as last year, finding Bright my neighbour, with which I was very well pleased. Granville and Hartington both much preferred my continuing *on* the front bench to my going elsewhere.' Lord Hartington, strongly encouraged against his own inclinations by Mr. Gladstone, accepted a thankless and unpromising post, and held it with honour and credit for five difficult years to come.

[1] *Blachford's Letters*, p. 362. [2] *Herod.* vii. 162.
[3] *Congregationalist*, Feb. 1875, p. 66.

CHAPTER II

VATICANISM

(*1874–1875*)

Let no susceptibilities, puritan, protestant, anglican, or other, be startled if we observe that Rome is, and may long be, in some important respects, the centre of the Christian world. It is indeed a centre which repels as well as attracts; which probably repels even more than it attracts; but which, whether repelling or attracting, influences.—GLADSTONE (1875).

ONE question, as the reader by this time well knows, living deepest in Mr. Gladstone's heart and mind from his first book in 1838 onwards, was the relation of the churches to modern society. English statesmen are wont to be either blind to the existence of such a question, or else they seek an easy refuge from it in a perfunctory erastianism, sometimes intellectually refined, sometimes a little brutish, but always shallow. In all the three great branches of Christianity, the Latin, the Greek or orthodox, the protestant, Mr. Gladstone's interest was incessant, sincere, and profound. It covered their theology, their organization, their history and principles of growth, the bearings of their system upon individual character and social well-being all over Europe. He was one of the very few public men capable of discerning that the fall of the temporal power of the pope marked a more startling change and a profounder crisis in human history, than the unification of Italy, the unification of Germany, the reconstructed republic in France, perhaps even than the preservation of the American Union. He knew the force of ideas in the world; he realised the vast transformations that had in their succession swept over the minds of men since cardinal dogmas had been established; he comprehended the motion in articles of faith, as men made their 'voyagings through strange seas of thought'; he was alive to the fact that moral crises brought on by change in intellectual outlook and temperature, are of deeper concern than questions of territory, or dynasty, or form of government. The moral crisis is what reaches furthest and matters most. A movement of the first magnitude was accentuated by Pius IX., when by the Syllabus of 1864 he challenged modern society in all its

foundations, its aims, its principles, in the whole range of its ideals. Some called this daring ultimatum the gravest event since the French uprising in 1789. The Syllabus prepared the way for a more elaborately organized operation on behalf of papal authority. The train was secretly laid for a grand reaction, a grand re-installation of the Christian faith.[1]

The Pope had been despoiled of territory, his sway within the walls of Rome itself was in constant danger, his most powerful protector north of the Alps had been weakened and humiliated by protestant Prussia. He was now to be compensated for his calamities by a majestic demonstration of his hold upon the spiritual allegiance of millions of adherents in every portion of the habitable globe. The twentieth ecumenical council assembled in St. Peter's at Rome on December 8, 1869. In this gathering of catholic prelates from both hemispheres, two antagonistic schools confronted one another. The ultramontanes held that the revolutionary welter and confusion of the modern world could only be healed by solemn affirmation of the principle of sovereign authority lodged in an infallible pope, with absolute power to define by that apostolic authority what ought to be held as articles of faith or morals. The assumptions, the standards, the ruling types of the modern age, they boldly encountered with rigid iteration of maxims of old time, imposing obedience and submission to a fixed social order and a divinely commissioned hierarchy. Inflexibility was to be the single watchword by which the church could recover a world that, from Naples even to Mexico, seemed to be rapidly drifting away from her. The opposing school took other ground. Perhaps they saw that supremacy is one thing, and infallibility another thing quite different. The liberal catholics did not contest the dogma of papal infallibility; they questioned the expediency of its proclamation; they were for associating ideas of religion with ideas of liberty; they were not for extending the domain of miracle and the supernatural.

Then as in the old historic councils, influence of race and nation had decisive effects. It could not be otherwise in what was in essence a conflict between a centralized doctrinal authority on the one hand, and the inextinguishable tendency towards national churches on the other. The Italian bishops went with the Pope. The Germans, as of old they had been for emperor against priest, were now on the side of freedom against what certain of them did not hesitate to call tyranny and fraud. Some of the ablest of the French were true to Gallican tradition and resisted the decree. Among the most active and uncompromising of all the ultramontane party was our English Manning.[2]

[1] See Cecconi's *Storia del Conc. Vat.* i. p. 3. For Mr. Gladstone's earlier views on the temporal power, see above, vol. i. p. 299.

[2] See Purcell, ii. chap. 16.

At the end of November 1869, Acton had written to Mr. Gladstone from Rome. 'Your letter is a very sad one,' Mr. Gladstone answered. 'I feel as deep and real an interest in the affairs of other Christian communions as in my own; and most of all in the case of the most famous of them all, and the one within which the largest number of Christian souls find their spiritual food.' Before Manning left for Rome, an amiable correspondence took place between Mr. Gladstone and him. 'How sad it is for us both'—this was Mr. Gladstone's starting-point —'considering our personal relations, that we should now be in this predicament, that the things which the one looks to as the salvation of faith and church, the other regards as their destruction.'

To Mr. Odo Russell, now the informal agent of the British Government in Rome, the prime minister wrote :—

It is curious that Manning has so greatly changed his character. When he was archdeacon with us, all his strength was thought to lie in a governing faculty, and in its wise moderation. Now he is ever quoted as the *ultra* of ultras, and he seems greatly to have overshot his mark. The odds seem to be that the child yet unborn will rue the calling of this council. For if the best result arrive in the triumph of the fallibilitarians, will not even this be a considerable shock to the credit and working efficacy of the papal system? You must really be *all* eyes and ears, a very Argus in both organs, until the occasion has gone by.

As for the issue of the council, Acton, having Mr. Odo Russell in agreement with him, from the first conveyed to Mr. Gladstone his opinion that the pope would prevail.

'The only hope in my mind,' said Mr. Gladstone in reply, 'is that there may be a real minority, and that it may speak plainly. A few bold men would easily insure themselves a noble immortality. But will *any* have the courage? The Italian government have one and only one method in their hands of fighting the pope: and that is to run, against nomination from Rome, the old and more popular methods of choosing bishops by clerical election, with the *approbation of the flock*.[1] Unless they resort to this they can do nothing.'

'All the accounts from Rome,' he tells Lacaita (Jan. 2, 1870), 'are as bad as possible. For the first time in my life, I shall now be obliged to talk about popery; for it would be a scandal to call the religion they are manufacturing at Rome by the same name as that of Pascal, or of Bossuet, or of Ganganelli. The truth is that ultramontanism is an anti-social power, and never has it more undisguisedly assumed that character than in the Syllabus.'

The French government wrote despatches of mild protest but

[1] 'Outside the Roman state, I am amazed at the Italian government giving over into the hands of the pope not only the nomination to the bishoprics as spiritual offices, but a nomination which is to carry with it the temporalities of the sees. They ought to know their own business best; but to me it seems that this is liberality carried into folly; and I know that some Italians think so.'—To Lord Granville, Dec. 21, 1870.

said nothing of withdrawing their garrison. Mr. Gladstone and Lord Clarendon were for informing the Roman court that they were cognizant of the French despatches, and approved of their tenor. The Queen and the cabinet, however, were entirely averse to meddling with the council, and nothing was done officially. This did not prevent Mr. Gladstone from telling Archbishop Manning what impediments would be placed in the way of Irish legislation by the state of English feeling as to the Syllabus and other papal proceedings. '*My* feelings and convictions,' he says (April 16), 'are as you well know decidedly with your "opposition," which I believe to be contending for the religious and civil interests of mankind against influences highly disastrous and menacing to both. But the prevailing opinion is that it is better to let those influences take their course, and work out the damage which they will naturally and surely entail upon the see of Rome and upon what is bound to it.' In parliament there was an utter aversion to the Roman policy, and he gives instances, noting even a change of opinion about the Irish land bill. 'What I have described is no matter of speculation. I know it by actual and daily touch. I am glad you have moved me to state it in some detail. It is to me matter of profound grief, especially as regards land in Ireland.'

To Lord Acton:—

Of all the prelates at Rome, none have a finer opportunity, to none is a more crucial test now applied, than to those of the United States. For if there, where there is nothing of covenant, of restraint, or of equivalent between the church and the state, the propositions of the Syllabus are still to have the countenance of the episcopate, it becomes really a little difficult to maintain in argument the civil rights of such persons to toleration, however conclusive be the argument of policy in favour of granting it. I can hardly bring myself to speculate or care on what particular day the foregone conclusion is to be finally adopted. My grief is sincere and deep, but it is at the whole thing, so ruinous in its consequences as they concern faith. In my view, the size of the minority though important, is not nearly so important as the question whether there will be a minority at all.

There was a minority. In a division taken at a late stage, 451 composed the majority, 88 resisted, and 62 were for a new examination. Then the minority turned their backs on Rome; and on July 18 the definition of infallibility was acclaimed in St. Peter's in presence of the pope by 533 against 2.

Mr. Gladstone is very glad when Clarendon instructs Mr. Russell to turn his back on the festivities at Rome. 'The whole proceeding has been monstrous, and it will hereafter become one of the laughing-stocks of history. The fanaticism of the middle ages is really sober compared with that of the nineteenth century.' 'The proclamation of Infallibility,' he said to Bishop Moriarty, 'I must own I look upon as the most portentous (taking them singly), of all events in the history of the Christian church.'

III

The next day, as we know, war was declared by France against Germany, the French garrison left Rome, and on September 20 the Italians marched in.

A month before the war broke out, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Clarendon: 'I would avoid any official support of the Italian application to France for the evacuation of Rome, by saying that this country had always abstained from mixing in that question; and that we were the more induced to persevere in that policy from being well convinced that the French government is perfectly aware that in this country the occupation of any part of the pontifical territories by French troops is regarded with regret, pain, and disapproval. Further, that those who most strongly entertain these sentiments, are generally the persons who most highly value, and have most striven to promote, the good understanding between France and England.'

The occupation of Rome by the Italian government brought upon Mr. Gladstone various demands and movements from different parts of the country. His cabinet agreed that the proper course was to decline all interference with a view to the restoration of the temporal power, though they accepted the task of promoting, by means of friendly representations, arrangements to secure the pontiff's freedom and becoming support. Then some of his presbyterian friends asked him why he should even do so much as this, when he would take no such steps for the moderator of the free church. Now consider, Mr. Gladstone replied: 'the pope is a sovereign who was in lawful possession of large revenues, and who had charged himself with the support of a body of cardinals, ministers, nuncios, servants, and guards out of those revenues. He has been dispossessed, not for any fault of his own, but because clerical dominion was deemed intolerable. In the maintenance of the pope and his court, followers and agents, six millions of our fellow-subjects or thereabouts are deeply interested; and they are making demands upon us which we are forced to decline. But I should for one be ashamed to deny that there are the strongest equitable claims upon the Italian government growing out of the past state of things; that in these equitable claims the six millions I speak of have a real interest and share; and as the matter is international, and they have no *locus standi* with the Italian government, it is our part so far to plead their cause if need be.'

IV

Four years elapsed before Mr. Gladstone was in a position to follow up his strong opinions on the injury done, as he believed, to human liberty by the Vatican decrees. But the great debate between ultramontanes and old catholics was followed by him with an interest that never slackened. In September 1874 he

went to Munich, and we can hardly be wrong in ascribing to that visit the famous tract which was to make so lively a stir before the end of the year. His principal object was to communicate with Dr. Döllinger, and this object, he tells Mrs. Gladstone, was fully gained. 'I think,' he says, 'I have spent two-thirds of my whole time with Dr. Döllinger, who is indeed a most remarkable man, and it makes my blood run cold to think of *his* being excommunicated in his venerable but, thank God, hale and strong old age. In conversation we have covered a wide field. I know no one with whose mode of viewing and handling religious matters I more cordially agree. . . . He is wonderful, and simple as a child.'

'I think it was in 1874,' Döllinger afterwards mentioned, 'that I remember Gladstone's paying me a visit at six o'clock in the evening. We began talking on political and theological subjects, and became, both of us, so engrossed with the conversation, that it was two o'clock at night when I left the room to fetch a book from my library bearing on the matter in hand. I returned with it in a few minutes, and found him deep in a volume he had drawn out of his pocket—true to his principle of never losing time—during my momentary absence.'[1] 'In the course of a walk out of Munich in the travelling season of 1874,' Mr. Gladstone wrote sixteen years later, 'Dr. Döllinger told me that he was engaged in the work of retrial through the whole circle of his Latin teaching and knowledge. The results were tested in his proceedings at Bonn, when he attempted to establish a *formula concordiae* upon the questions which most gravely divided Christendom.'[2] Among other topics Mr. Gladstone commended to his mentor the idea of a republication in a series, of the best works of those whom he would call the Henotic or Eirenic writers on the differences that separate Christians and churches from one another. He also read Pichler on the theology of Leibnitz, not without suspicion that it was rather Pichler than Leibnitz. But neither Leibnitz nor Pichler was really in his mind.

After the session of 1874 when the public ear and mind had been possessed by the word Ritualism, he had as usual sought a vent in a magazine article for the thoughts with which he was teeming.[3] He speaks with some disdain of the question whether a handful of the clergy are or are not engaged in 'an utterly hopeless and visionary effort to Romanize the church and people of England.' At no time, he says, since the sanguinary reign of Mary has such a scheme been possible. Least of all, he proceeds, could the scheme have life in it 'when Rome has substituted for the proud boast of *semper eadem* a

[1] *Conversations of Döllinger*, by Louise von Kobell, p. 100.

[2] Mr. Gladstone in *Speaker*, Jan. 18, 1890.

[3] *Gleanings*, vi. pp. 107-191. There the reader will also find (p. 141) the six resolutions deemed by him to furnish a safer and wiser basis of legislation than the Public Worship Regulation Act.

policy of violence and change in faith; when she has refurbished and paraded anew every rusty tool she was fondly thought to have disused; when no one can become her convert, without renouncing his moral and mental freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another; and when she has equally repudiated modern thought and ancient history.' If these strong words expressed his state of mind before he went abroad, we may readily imagine how the Bavarian air would fan the flame.

Though Dr. Döllinger himself—'so inaccessible to religious passions'—was not aware of the purpose of his English friend, there can be little doubt that Mr. Gladstone returned from Munich with the same degree of internal ferment as that which had possessed his mind on his return from Naples three-and-twenty years before. In October he writes to Lord Acton from Hawarden:—

What you have said on the subject of ultramontanism and of the mode in which it should be handled, appears to me to be as wise and as good as is possible. It is really a case for hitting hard, but for hitting the right men. In anything I say or do on the subject, I would wish heartily and simply to conform to the spirit of your words. But I feel myself drawn onwards. Indeed some of your words help to draw me. The question with me now is whether I shall or shall not publish a tract which I have written, and of which the title would probably be, 'The Vatican Decrees in their bearing on Civil Allegiance: a Political Expostulation.' I incline to think that I ought to publish it. If it were in your power and will to run over here for a night or two I should seek to profit by your counsel, and should ask you to read as much of the MS. as your patience would endure. A more substantial attraction would be that I could go over much of my long and interesting conversations with Döllinger.

V

The pamphlet[1] appeared in November, and was meant for an argument that the decree of infallibility aimed a deadly blow at the old historic, scientific, and moderate school; it was a degradation of the episcopal order; it carried to its furthest point that spirit of absolutist centralisation, which in its excesses is as fatal to vigorous life in the church as in the state; it overthrew the principle not even denied by the council of Trent in the sixteenth century, that the pope and his judgments were triable by the assembled representatives of the Christian world.

Thrice in history it seemed as if the constitutional party in the church was about to triumph: at the council of Constance in the fifteenth century; in the conflict between the French episcopate and Innocent XI. in the days of Bossuet; and thirdly, when Clement XIV., exactly a hundred years before now, dealt with the Jesuits and 'levelled in the dust the

[1] *The Vatican Decrees in their bearing on Civil Allegiance: a Political Expostulation.*

deadliest foes that mental and moral liberty have ever known.' From July 1870 all this had passed away, and the constitutional party had seen its death-warrant signed and sealed. The 'myrmidons of the apostolic chamber' had committed their church to revolutionary measures. The vast new claims were lodged in the reign of a pontiff, who by the dark Syllabus of 1864 had condemned free speech, a free press, liberty of conscience, toleration of nonconformity, the free study of civil and philosophic things independently of church authority, marriage unless sacramentally contracted, and all definition by the state of the civil rights of the church.

'It has been a favourite purpose of my life,' Mr. Gladstone said, 'not to conjure up, but to conjure down, public alarms. I am not now going to pretend that either foreign foe or domestic treason can, at the bidding of the court of Rome, disturb these peaceful shores. But although such fears may be visionary, it is more visionary still to suppose for one moment that the claims of Gregory VII., of Innocent III., and of Boniface VIII. have been disinterred in the nineteenth century, like hideous mummies picked out of Egyptian sarcophagi, in the interests of archæology, or without a definite and practical aim.' What, then, was the clear and foregone purpose behind the parade of all these astonishing reassertions? The first was — by claims to infallibility in creed, to the prerogative of miracles, to dominion over the unseen world - to satisfy spiritual appetites, sharpened into reaction and made morbid by 'the levity of the destructive speculations so widely current, and the notable hardihood of the anti-Christian writing of the day.' This alone, however, would not explain the deliberate provocation of all the 'risks of so daring a raid upon the civil sphere.' The answer was to be found in the favourite design, hardly a secret design, of restoring by the road of force when any favourable opportunity should arise, and of re-erecting, the terrestrial throne of the popedom, 'even if it could only be re-erected on the ashes of the city, and amidst the whitening bones of the people.'

And this brings the writer to the immediate practical aspects of his tract. 'If the baleful power which is expressed by the phrase *Curia Romana*, and not at all adequately rendered in its historic force by the usual English equivalent "Court of Rome," really entertains the scheme, it doubtless counts on the support in every country of an organised and devoted party; which, when it can command the scales of political power, will promote interference, and while it is in a minority, will work for securing neutrality. As the peace of Europe may be in jeopardy, and as the duties even of England as one of its constabulary authorities, might come to be in question, it would be most interesting to know the mental attitude of our Roman catholic fellow-countrymen in England

and Ireland with reference to the subject; and it seems to be one on which we are entitled to solicit information.' Too commonly the spirit of the convert was to be expressed by the notorious words, 'a catholic first, an Englishman afterwards' —words that properly convey no more than a truism, 'for every Christian must seek to place his religion even before his country in his inner heart; but very far from a truism in the sense in which we have been led to construe them.' This, indeed, was a new and very real 'papal aggression.' For himself, Mr. Gladstone said, it should not shake his allegiance to 'the rule of maintaining equal civil rights irrespectively of religious differences.' Had he not given conclusive indications of that view, by supporting in parliament as a minister since the council, the repeal in 1871 of the law against ecclesiastical titles, whose enactment he had opposed twenty years before?

That the pamphlet should create intense excitement, was inevitable from the place of the writer in the public eye, from the extraordinary vehemence of the attack, and above all from the unquenchable fascination of the topic. Whether the excitement in the country was more than superficial; whether most readers fathomed the deep issues as they stood, not between catholic and protestant, but between catholic and catholic within the fold; whether in fastening upon the civil allegiance of English Romanists Mr. Gladstone took the true point against vaticanism—these are questions that we need not here discuss. The central proposition made a cruel dilemma for a large class of the subjects of the Queen; for the choice assigned to them by assuming stringent logic was between being bad citizens if they submitted to the decree of papal infallibility, and bad catholics if they did not. Protestant logicians wrote to Mr. Gladstone that if his contention were good, we ought now to repeal catholic emancipation and again clap on the fetters. Syllogisms in action are but stupid things after all, unless they are checked by a tincture of what seems paradox.[1] Apart from the particular issue in his vacation pamphlet, Mr. Gladstone believed himself to be but following his own main track in life and thought in his assault upon 'a policy which declines to acknowledge the high place assigned to liberty in the counsels of Providence, and which upon the pretext of the abuse that like every other good she suffers, expels her from its system.'

Among the names that he was never willing to discuss with me—Machiavelli, for instance—was Joseph de Maistre, the hardiest, most adventurous, most ingenious and incisive of all

[1] Republishing his article on ritualism in 1878 (*Gleanings*, vi. p. 127) Mr. Gladstone appends in a footnote on the passage that stated the anti-vatican campaign, an expression of belief and hope that 'some at least who have joined the Latin church since the great change effected by the Vatican council, would upon occasion given, *whether with logical warrant or not*, adhere under all circumstances to their civil loyalty and duty.'

the speculative champions of European reaction.[1] In the pages of de Maistre he might have found the reasoned base on which the ultramontane creed may be supposed to rest. He would have found liberty depicted less as a blessing than a scourge; even Bossuet denounced as a heretic with dubious chances of salvation, for his struggle on behalf of a national church against Roman centralisation; the old Greeks held up to odium as a race of talkers, frivolous, light, and born incorrigible dividers. In dealing with de Maistre, Mr. Gladstone would have had a foeman worthier of his powerful steel than the authors of the Syllabus, Schema, Postulatum, and all the rest of what he called the vaticanism of 1870. But here, as always, he was man of action, and wrote for a specific though perhaps a fugitive purpose.

VI

At the end of the year the total number printed of the tract was 145,000, and of these 120,000 were in a people's edition. 'My pamphlet,' he tells Lacaita, 'has brought upon me such a mass of work as I can hardly cope with, and I am compelled to do all things as succinctly as possible, though my work is with little intermission from morning till night. I agree with you that the pamphlet in the main tells its own story; and I am glad there is no need to select in a hurry some one to write on the difference between papism and catholicism. . . . There is no doubt that the discussion opens, *i.e.* makes a breach in the walls of the papal theology, and it ought to be turned to account. But I shall have enough to do with all my hands, if I am to work properly through the task I have undertaken. Not, I trust, for long, for I think another pamphlet should suffice to end it on my side. But I am vexed that Manning (as if he had been pulled up at Rome), after having announced his formal reply six weeks ago, hangs fire and now talks of delaying it.' The result, he assures Lord Granville (Nov. 25), 'must be injurious to the pestilent opinions that have so grievously obtained the upper hand in that church, and to the party which *means* to have a war in Europe for the restoration of the temporal power. To place impediments in their way has been my principal purpose.'

He told Acton (Dec. 18), 'When you were putting in caveats and warnings, you did not say to me, "Now mind, this affair will absorb some, perhaps many, months of your life." It has been so up to the present moment, and it evidently will be so for some time.' With Acton he carried on elaborate correspondence upon some of the questions raised by the Syllabus, notably on the effect of the pope's disciplinary judgment on anglican marriages, converting them into relations that were not marriage at all. He fears that he has conceded too much

[1] He died in 1821, when Mr. Gladstone was a boy at Eton.

to the papal party in not treating the Syllabus as *ex cathedra*; in allowing that the popes had been apt to claim dogmatic infallibility for wellnigh a thousand years; as to the ecumenicity of the Vatican council. Among other matters he was reading 'the curious volumes of *Discorsi di Pio IX.*, published at Rome, and he might find it his duty to write collaterally upon them.' This duty he performed with much fidelity in the *Quarterly Review* for January 1875. He is active in interest about translations; keen to enlist auxiliaries in every camp and all countries; delighted with all utterances from Italy or elsewhere that make in his direction, even noting with satisfaction that the agnostic Huxley was warm in approval. 'I pass my days and nights,' he tells the Duke of Argyll (Dec. 19), 'in the Vatican. Already the pope has given me two months of incessant correspondence and other hard work, and it may very well last two more. Nor is the work pleasant; but I am as far as possible from repenting of it, as no one else to whom the public would listen saved me the trouble. It is full of intense interest. Every post brings a mass of general reading, writing, or both. Forty covers of one kind or another to-day, and all my time is absorbed. But the subject is well worth the pains.' The Italians, Lord Granville told him, 'generally approved, but were puzzled why you should have thought it necessary.' Retorts and replies arose in swarms, including one from Manning and another from Newman. He was accused by some of introducing a Bismarckian *Kulturkampf* into England, of seeking to recover his lost popularity by pandering to no-popery, of disregarding the best interests of the country for the sake of his own restoration to power.[1]

I have now finished reading—he said at the beginning of February,—the 20th reply to my pamphlet. They cover 1000 pages. And I am hard at work preparing mine with a good conscience and I think a good argument. Manning has been, I think, as civil as he could. *Feb.* 5.—All this morning I have had to spend in hunting up one important statement of Manning's which I am almost convinced is a gross misstatement. . . . *Feb.* 6.—Manning in his 200 pages has not, I venture to say, made a single point against me. But I shall have to show up his quotations very seriously. We have exchanged one or two friendly notes. 8.—Worked on Vaticanism nearly all day and (an exception to my rule) late at night. 14.—Eight hours' work on my proof sheets. 15.—Went through Acton's corrections and notes on my proofs. 19.—Worked much in evening on finishing up my tract, Dr. Döllinger's final criticisms having arrived. He thinks highly of the work, which he observes will cut deeper than the former one, and be more difficult to deal with. By midnight I had the revises ready with the corrections. 20.—Inserted one or two references and wrote 'Press' on the 2nd revises. May the power and blessing of God go with the work.

The second tract was more pungent than the first, and it gave pleasure to an important minister abroad who had now

[illegible] Dr. Michael's *Ignaz von Döllinger*, p. 296. [illegible]

entangled himself by Falk laws and otherwise in a quarrel with the papacy. 'I have had a letter of thanks,' Mr. Gladstone writes to Hawarden (March 6), 'from Bismarck. This pamphlet is stouter, sharper, and cheaper than the last, but is only in its eleventh thousand, I believe.' Among others who replied to *Vaticanism* was Dr. Newman; he appended a new postscript of four-and-twenty pages to his former answer to the first of Mr. Gladstone's pamphlets. Its tone is courteous and argumentative -far too much so to please the ultras who had the Pope's ear—and without the wild hitting that Mr. Gladstone found in Manning.

Newman wrote to thank him (Jan. 17, 1875) for a letter that he described as 'forbearing and generous.' 'It has been a great grief to me,' said Newman, 'to have had to write against one whose career I have followed from first to last with so much (I may say) loyal interest and admiration. I had known about you from others, and had looked at you with kindly curiosity, before you came up to Christ Church, and from the time that you were launched into public life, you have retained a hold on my thoughts and on my gratitude by the various marks of attention which every now and then you have shown me, when you had an opportunity, and I could not fancy my ever standing towards you in any other relation than that which had lasted so long. What a fate it is, that now when so memorable a career has reached its formal termination [retirement from leadership], I should be the man, on the very day on which it closed, to present to you amid the many expressions of public sympathy which it elicits, a controversial pamphlet as my offering.' But he could not help writing it, he was called upon from such various quarters; and his conscience told him that he who had been in great measure the cause of so many becoming catholics, had no right to leave them in the lurch, when charges were made against them as serious as unexpected. 'I do not think,' he concluded, 'I ever can be sorry for what I have done, but I never can cease to be sorry for the necessity of doing it.'

VII

This fierce controversial episode was enough to show that the habit and temperament of action still followed him in the midst of all his purposes of retreat. Withdrawal from parliamentary leadership was accompanied by other steps, apparently all making in the same direction. He sold the house in Carlton House Terrace, where he had passed eight-and-twenty years of work and power and varied sociability. 'I had grown to the house,' he says (April 15), 'having lived more time in it than in any other since I was born, and mainly by reason of all that was done in it.' To Mrs. Gladstone he wrote (Feb. 28):—

I do not wonder that you feel parting from the house will be a blow

and a pang. It is nothing less than this to me, but it must be faced and you will face it gallantly. So much has occurred there; and thus it is leaving not the house only but the neighbourhood, where I have been with you for more than thirty-five years, and altogether nearly forty. The truth is that innocently and from special causes we have on the whole been housed better than according to our circumstances. All along Carlton House Terrace I think you would not find any one with less than £20,000 a year, and most of them with much more.

He sold his collection of china and his Wedgwood ware.[1] He despatched his books to Hawarden. He can hardly have resolved on retirement that should be effective and complete, or else he must have arranged to quit the House of Commons. In his diary he entered (March 30, 1875):—

Views about the future and remaining section of my life. In outline they are undefined but in substance definite. The main point is this: that setting aside exceptional circumstances which would have to provide for themselves, my prospective work is not parliamentary. My ties will be slight to an assembly with whose tendencies I am little in harmony at the present time; nor can I flatter myself that what is called the public out of doors is more sympathetic. But there is much to be done with the pen, all bearing much on high and sacred ends, for even Homeric study, as I view it, is in this very sense of high importance; and what lies beyond this is concerned directly with the great subject of belief.

To Mrs. Gladstone he wrote (May 19, 1875):—'I am feeling as it were my way towards the purposes of the rest of my life. It will I dare say clear by degrees. For the general business of the country, my ideas and temper are thoroughly out of harmony with the ideas and temper of the day, especially as they are represented in London.'

The movement of negation had been in full swing for a dozen years before the force and weight of it had, amid the stress and absorption of daily business, reached his inner mind. In May 1872, in a speech as member of the council of King's College—'averse from, and little used to platform speaking,' as he described himself to Manning—he used some strong language about those who promulgate as science what is not science and as religion what is not religion; but he took care to sever himself from the recent Roman decrees, which 'seemed much to resemble the proclamation of a perpetual war against the progress and the movement of the human mind.'[2] In December 1872, he caused a marked sensation by an address at Liverpool, in which he spoke of Strauss's book on *New and Old Belief*.[3]

[1] For a detailed description of this collection, see *Times*, June 21, 26, 1875. His London house for the next five years was 73 Harley Street.

[2] *Guardian*, May 22, 1872.

[3] In the preface to his fourth edition Strauss said, 'My countrymen might learn from the foreigner how the earnest conscientious statesman recognises a similar quality in an author whose influence he nevertheless considers to be dangerous. They might learn how the true gentleman speaks of one whom he cannot but admit to have devoted a long life to the search of truth, and allow to have sacrificed every personal prospect to the promulgation of that which appeared to him as such.'

He had become a member of the metaphysical society, where eminent representatives of every faith and of no faith discussed every aspect of the foundations of human creeds. He was of too masculine and energetic a cast of mind to feel mere shock as he listened to Huxley, Tyndall, Clifford, Harrison, firmly arguing materialism or positivism or agnosticism or other unhistoric forms. That his whole soul was energetically oppugnant, I need not say. His reverence for freedom never wavered. He wrote to an editor who had criticised his Liverpool address (Jan. 3, 1873) :—

In the interest of my address, I wish to say that not a word to my knowledge fell from me limiting the range of free inquiry, nor have I ever supposed St. Paul to say anything so silly as 'Prove all things: but some you must not prove.' Doubtless some obscurity of mine, I know not what, has led to an error into which the able writer of the article has fallen, not alone.

To the Duke of Argyll he wrote :—

Dec. 28, '72.—I have been touching upon deep and dangerous subjects at Liverpool. Whether I went beyond my province many may doubt. But of the extent of the mischief I do not doubt any more than of its virulence. All that I hear from day to day convinces me of the extension of this strange epidemic, for it is not, considering how it comes, worthy of being called a rational or scientific process. Be it, however, what it may, we politicians are children playing with toys in comparison to that great work of and for manhood, which has to be done, and will yet be done, in restoring belief.

Sir Robert Morier sent him from Munich Frohschammer's reply to Strauss. 'If I understand him aright,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'he is a unitarian, minus Miracle and Inspiration.' The whole book seemed to him able, honest, and diligent :—

'But,' he adds, 'I am one of those who think the Christianity of Frohschammer (as I have described it) is like a tall tree scientifically prepared for the saw by the preliminary process, well known to wood-cutters, of clearing away with the axe all projecting roots, which as long as they remained rendered the final operation impossible. This first process leaves the tree standing in a very trim condition, much more mathematical in form, as it is more near a cylinder, than in its native state. The business of the saw, when the horse and the man arrive, is soon accomplished.'

To his article on ritualism he prefixed as motto two short lines of Pindar, about days that are to come being wisest witnesses.[1] In spite of retreat, it was impossible that he should forget the vast responsibility imposed upon him, both by his gifts and by the popular ascendency into which they had brought him. His was not the retreat of self-indulgence, and the days that were to come speedily brought him duties that were to bear him far into regions of storm and conflict now

1 Olymp. i. 53.

unforeseen. Meanwhile, with occasional visits to Westminster, he lived even and industrious days at Hawarden, felling trees, working at Greek mythology and ethnology, delighting in the woods and glades of the park, above all delighting in the tranquillity of his 'temple of peace.' Besides being the bookroom of a student, this was still a far-shining beacon in the popular eye. If sages, scholars, heroes, saints, with time's serene and hallowed gravity looked upon him from their shelves, yet loud echoes sounded in his ear from roaring surges of an outer world—from turbid ebb and flow of all the struggle and clamorous hopes and half-blind mysterious instincts of the nations.

CHAPTER III

THE OCTAGON

It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.—EMERSON.

NEAR the end of the eighties, Mr. Gladstone built for himself a fire-proof room at the north-western corner of his temple of peace. In this Octagon—'a necessity of my profession and history'—he stored the letters and papers of his crowded lifetime. He estimated the 'selected letters' addressed to himself at sixty thousand, and the mass of other letters that found their way into the Octagon without selection, along with more than a score of large folios containing copies of his own to other people, run to several tens of thousands more. There are between five and six hundred holographs from the Queen, afterward designated by him in his will to be an heirloom. 'It may amuse you,' he told Lord Granville, who always wrote the shortest letters that ever were known, 'to learn that your letters to me weigh fifteen pounds and a-half.' Probably no single human being ever received sixty thousand letters worth keeping, and of these it is safe to say that three-fourths of them might as well have been destroyed as soon as read, including a

certain portion that might just as well never have been either written or read. This slightly improvident thrift recalls the jealous persons who will not suffer the British Museum to burn its rubbish, on the curious principle that what was never worth producing must always be worth preserving.

As for Mr. Gladstone's own share, he explains his case in what he says (1865) to the widow of Mr. Cobden :—'Of the kind of correspondence properly called private and personal, I have none: indeed for many long long years it has been out of my power, except in very few instances, to keep up this kind of correspondence.' The exceptions are few indeed. Half of the contents of this crowded little chamber are papers of business,—nightly letters to the Queen, telling her what had gone on in the House and what sort of figure had been cut by its debaters, reports of meetings of the cabinet, memoranda for such meetings, notes for speeches, endless correspondence with colleagues, and all the other operations incident to the laborious machinery of government in the charge of a master engineer. In this region of his true calling, all is order, precision, persistency, and the firmness and ease of the strong. For many years in that department all was action, strength, success. Church leaders again contribute considerable piles, but these, too, mainly concern church business for the hour, and the business has now even for adherents naturally fallen out of memory. The more miscellaneous papers are different. There a long and strange procession flits before our eye—dreams, 'little bustling passions,' trivialities, floating like a myriad motes into the dim Octagon. We are reminded how vast a space in our ever-dwindling days is consumed by social invitations and the discovery of polite reasons for evading them. 'Bona verba' is a significant docket prompting the secretary's reply. It is borne in upon us how grievously the burden of man's lot is aggravated by slovenly dates, illegible signatures, and forgetfulness that writing is something meant to be read. There is a mountain of letters from one correspondent so mercilessly written, that the labour of deciphering them would hardly be justified, even if one could hope to recover traces of the second decade of Livy or the missing books of the *Annals* of Tacitus. Foreign rulers, Indian potentates, American citizens, all write to the most conspicuous Englishman of the time. In an unformed hand a little princess thanks him for a photograph, and says, 'I am so glad to have seen you at Windsor, and will try and remember you all my life.' There are bushels of letters whose writers 'say all that they conscientiously can' for applicants, nominees, and candidates in every line where a minister is supposed to be able to lend a helping hand if he likes. Actors send him boxes, queens of song press on him lozenges infallible for the vocal cords, fine ladies dabbling in Italian seek counsel, and not far

off, what is more to the point, are letters from young men thanking him for his generosity in aiding them to go to Oxford with a view to taking orders. Charles Kean, a popular tragedian of those times, and son of one more famous still, thanks Mr. Gladstone for his speech at a complimentary dinner to him (March 1862), and says how proud he is to remember that they were boys at Eton together. Then there are the erudite but unfruitful correspondents, with the melancholy docket, '*Learning thrown away*'; and charming professors of poetry—as though the alto should insist on singing the basso part—impressively assure him how dreadfully uneasy they are about the weakness of our army, and how horribly low upon the security of our Indian Empire.

Some have said that to peruse the papers of a prime minister must lower one's view of human nature. Perhaps this may partly depend upon the prime minister, partly on the height of our expectations from our fellow-creatures. If such a survey is in any degree depressing, there can be no reason why it should be more so than any other large inspection of human life. In the Octagon as in any similar repository we come upon plenty of baffled hopes, chagrin in finding a career really ended, absurd over-estimates of self, over-estimates of the good chances of the world, vexation of those who have chosen the wrong path at the unfair good luck of those who have chosen the right. We may smile, but surely in good-natured sympathy, at the zeal of poor ladies for a post for husbands of unrecognised merit, or at the importunity of younger sons with large families but inadequate means. Harmless things of this sort need not turn us into satirists or cynics.

All the riddles of the great public world are there—why one man becomes prime minister, while another who ran him close at school and college ends with a pension from the civil list; why the same stable and same pedigree produce a Derby winner and the poor cab-hack; why one falls back almost from the start, while another runs famously until the corner, and then his vaulting ambition dwindles to any place of 'moderate work and decent emolument'; how new competitors swim into the field of vision; how suns rise and set with no return, and vanish as if they had never been suns but only ghosts or bubbles; how in these time-worn papers successive generations of active men run chequered courses, group following group, names blazing into the fame of a day, then like the spangles of a rocket expiring. Men write accepting posts, all excitement, full of hope and assurance of good work, and then we remember how quickly clouds came and the office ended in failure and torment. In the next pigeon-hole just in the same way is the radiant author's gift of his book that after all fell still-born. One need not be prime minister to know the eternal tale of the vanity of human wishes, or how men move,

Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse
To throw that faint thin line upon the shore.[1]

Nor are things all one way. If we find Mr. Gladstone writing to the Queen of 'the excellent parliamentary opening' of this man or that, who made the worst possible parliamentary close, there is the set-off of dull unmarked beginnings to careers that proved brilliant or weighty. If there are a thousand absurdities in the form of claims for place and honours and steps in the peerage, all the way up the ladder, from a branch post-office to the coveted blue riband of the garter, 'with no infernal nonsense of merit about it,' there are, on the other hand, not a few modest and considerate refusals, and we who have reasonable views of human nature, may set in the balance against a score of the begging tribe, the man of just pride who will not exchange his earldom for a marquisate, and the honest peer who to the proffer of the garter says, with gratitude evidently sincere, 'I regret, however, that I cannot conscientiously accept an honour which is beyond my deserts.' Then the Octagon contains abundant material for any student of the lessons of a parliamentary crisis, though perhaps the student knew before how even goodish people begin to waver in great causes, when they first seriously suspect the horrid truth that they may not after all be in a majority. Many squibs, caricatures, and malicious diatribes, dated in Mr. Gladstone's own hand, find shelter. But then compensation for faintheartedness or spite abounds in the letters of the staunch. And these not from the party politicians merely. Mr. Gladstone stirred different and deeper waters. The famous fighting bishop, Phillpotts of Exeter, then drawing on towards ninety and the realms of silence, writes to him on the Christmas Day of 1863:—'A Christian statesman is a rare object of reverence and honour. Such I entirely believe are you. I often remember the early days of my first intercourse with you. Your high principles gave an early dignity to your youth, and promised the splendid earthly career which you are fulfilling. I shall not live to witness that fulfilment.' A whole generation later, General Booth wrote:—'Throughout the world no people will pray more fervently and believingly for your continued life and happiness than the officers and soldiers of the salvation army.' Here is Mr. Spurgeon, the most popular and effective of the nonconforming preachers and workers of the time, writing:—

I felt ready to weep when you were treated with so much contumely by your opponent in your former struggle; and yet I rejoiced that you were educating this nation to believe in conscience and truth. . . . I wish I could brush away the gadflies, but I suppose by this time you have been stung so often that the system has become invulnerable. . . . You are loved by hosts of us as intensely as you are hated by certain of the savage party.

[1] George Meredith.

And when Mr. Gladstone was to visit Spurgeon's tabernacle (Jan. 1882) :—

I feel like a boy who is to preach with his father to listen to him. I shall try not to know that you are there at all, but just preach to my poor people the simple word which has held them by their thousands these twenty-eight years. You do not know how those of us regard you, who feel it a joy to live when a premier believes in righteousness. We believe in no man's infallibility, but *it is restful to be sure of one man's integrity.*

That admirable sentence marks the secret.

All the religious agitations of the time come before us. Eminent foreign converts from the Roman church still find comfort in warning this most unshaken of believers against 'a superficial and sceptical liberalism.' Others, again, condemned for heresy hail him as 'dear and illustrious master'—with no cordial response, we may surmise. Relying on Mr. Gladstone's character for human-heartedness and love of justice, people submit to him some of the hard domestic problems then and so often forced upon the world by the quarrels of the churches. One lady lays before him (1879) with superabundant detail a case where guardians insisted on the child of a mixed marriage being brought up as a protestant, against the fervid wishes of the surviving parent, a catholic. Mr. Gladstone masters the circumstances, forms his judgment, elaborates it in a closely argued memorandum, and does not evade the responsibility of advising. In another of these instances the tragedy is reversed; the horrid oppression is perpetrated on the protestant mother by the catholic father, and here too it is Mr. Gladstone to whom the sufferer appeals for intercession.

His correspondents have not always so much substance in them. One lady of evangelical strain, well known in her time, writes to him about turbulence in Ireland on the last day of 1880. The private secretary dockets :—'Wishes you a blessed new year; but goes on in a very impertinent strain attributing your "inaction" in Ireland to unprincipled colleagues, and to want of heavenly guidance. Encloses suggestions for prayer.' In such instances, even when the appeal came near to raving, Mr. Gladstone whenever he thought the writer's motives sincere, seems to have replied with patience, and at a length very different from the pithy brevity of the Iron Duke upon the like occasions. Sometimes we may assume that the secretary's phlegmatic docket sufficed, as on an epistle thus described :—'1. Sends review in —— on his book. 2. Would like you to read —— and —— (his poems). 3. Will send you soon his prose on ——. 4. Hopes you will not overwork yourself. 5. His children call you St. William.' Sometimes we know not whether it is simplicity or irony that inspires the grave politeness of his replies. He seems to be in all sincerity surprised at the view taken by somebody 'of the reluctance of

public men to hold interviews for unexplained and indefinite purposes, and their preference for written communications.' Somebody writes a pamphlet on points of the ministerial policy, and suggests that each member of the government might order and distribute a competent number of copies. Mr. Gladstone immediately indicates two serious difficulties, first that the ministers would then make themselves responsible for the writer's opinion in detail no less than in mass, and second their intervention would greatly detract from its weight. Even importunity for a subscription never makes him curt :— 'I am sure you will not misconstrue me, when I beg respectfully to state that your efforts will stand better without my personal co-operation.'

The correspondence is polyglot. In one little bundle, Cavour writes in Italian and French ; the Archbishop of Cephalonia congratulates him in Greek on the first Irish Land bill ; and in the same tongue the Archbishop of Chios gives him a book on the union of the Armenian with the Anatolian communion ; Huber regales him with the luxury of German *Cursivschrift*. The archimandrite Myrianthes forwards him objects from the Holy Land. The patriarch of Constantinople (1896) sends greetings and blessings, and testifies to the bonds of fellowship between the eastern and anglican churches undisturbed since the days of Cyril Lukaris. Dupanloup, the famous Bishop of Orleans (1869), applauds the plan of *Juventus Mundi*, its grandeur, its beauty, its moral elevation ; and proceeds to ask how he can procure copies of the articles on *Ecce Homo*, as to which his curiosity has been aroused. A couple of notes (1864 and 1871) from Garibaldi, the great revolutionist, are neighbours to letters (1851-74) from Guizot, the great conservative. Three or four lines in French from Garibaldi were given to Mr. Gladstone the day before leaving Cliveden and England (April 24, 1864) : 'In leaving you pray accept a word of recognition for all the kindness you have heaped upon me, and for the generous interest you have at all times shown for the cause of my country.—Your devoted G. GARIBALDI.' The other shorter still (1871) begs him to do something for a French refugee. Minghetti, Ricasoli, and others of that celebrated group commemorate his faithful and effective goodwill to Italy. Daniel Manin the Venetian thanks him in admirable English for some books, as well as for his energetic and courageous act in drawing a perfidious king (Naples) before the bar of public opinion. Manzoni gives to a friend a letter of introduction (1845), and with Italian warmth of phrase expresses his lively recollection of the day on which he made Mr. Gladstone's acquaintance, and the admiration with which his name is followed. Mérimée, the polished and fastidious genius, presents to him a French consul at Corfu (1858) who in his quality of philhellene and hellenist desires ardently to make

the acquaintance of Homer's learned and eloquent commentator. Lesseps, whose hand gave so tremendous and impressive a turn to forces, policies, currents of trade, promises (1870) to keep an appointment, when he will have the double honour of being presented to the Princess Louise by a man so universally respected for the high services he has rendered to the Queen, to his country, and to the progress of the world.

If the language is polyglot, the topics are encyclopædic. Bishops send him their charges; if a divine translates a hymn, he submits it; if he hits upon an argument on the mysteries of the faith, or the vexed themes of theological debate, he despatches pages and pages to Hawarden, and receives page upon page in reply. Young authors, and especially young authoresses, pester him to review their books, though his patience and good nature make 'pester' seem an inapplicable word. A Scotch professor for some reason or another copies out and forwards to him one of Goethe's reflections and maxims:—

> How may a man attain to self-knowledge? By Contemplation? certainly not: but by Action. Try to do your Duty and you will find what you are fit for. But what is your Duty? The Demand of the Hour.

As if of all men then living on our planet, Mr. Gladstone were not he to whom such counsel was most superfluous. He replies (Oct. 9, 1880), 'I feel the immense, the over-mastering power of Goethe, but with such limited knowledge as I have of his works, I am unable to answer the question whether he has or has not been an evil genius of humanity.'

In 1839 Spedding, the Baconian, to whom years later the prime minister proposed that he should fill the chair of history at Cambridge, wrote to him that John Sterling, of whom Mr. Gladstone already knew something, was prevented by health from living in London, and so by way of meeting his friends on his occasional visits, had proposed that certain of them should agree to dine together cheaply once a month at some stated place. As yet Sterling had only spoken to Carlyle, John Mill, Maurice, and Bingham Baring. 'I hope,' says Spedding, 'that your devotion to the more general interests of mankind will not prevent your assisting in this little job.' Mr. Gladstone seems not to have assisted, though his friend Bishop Wilberforce did, and fell into some hot water in consequence. A veteran and proclaimed freethinker sets out to Mr. Gladstone his own recognition of what ought to be a truism, that he is for every man being faithful to his faith; that his aggressive denial of the inspiration of the Bible did not prevent him from sending a copy in large type to his old mother to read when her eyes were dim; that he respected consolations congenial to the conscience. 'I hope,' he says to Mr. Gladstone, 'there is a

future life, and if so, my not being sure of it will not prevent it, and I know of no better way of deserving it than by conscious service of humanity. The Universe never filled me with such wonder and awe as when I knew I could not account for it. *I admit ignorance is a privation. But to submit not to know where knowledge is withheld, seems but one of the sacrifices that reverence for truth imposes on us.*' The same correspondent speaks (1881) of 'the noble toleration which you have personally shown me, notwithstanding what you must think seriously erroneous views of mine, and upon which I do not keep silence.' Mr. Gladstone had written to him six years before (1875):—'Differing from you, I do not believe that secular motives are adequate either to propel or to restrain the children of our race, but I earnestly desire to hear the other side, and I appreciate the advantage of having it stated by sincere and high-minded men.' There is a letter too from the son of another conspicuous preacher of negation, replying to some words of Mr. Gladstone which he took to be disparaging of his parent, and begging him, 'a lifelong idealist yourself,' to think more worthily and sympathetically of one whom if he had known he would have appreciated and admired.

A considerable correspondence is here from the learned Bishop Stubbs (1888) on the character of Bishop Fisher of Rochester, the fellow-sufferer of More; on the Convocation Act of 1531 and the other Convocation Acts of Elizabeth; on Father Walsh's letters, and other matters of the sixteenth century. In fact, it is safe to assume that Mr. Gladstone has always some ecclesiastical, historical, theological controversy running alongside of the political and party business of the day. Nobody that ever lived tried to ride so many horses abreast. Another prelate puts a point that is worth remembering by every English school of foreign policy. 'In 1879,' writes Bishop Creighton (Feb. 15, 1887) 'when foreign affairs were much before the public, I suggested to a publisher a series of books dealing quite shortly and clearly with the political history and constitution of the chief states of Europe from 1815. I designed them for popular instruction, thinking it of great importance that people in general should know what they were talking about, when they spoke of France or Russia. . . . The result of my attempt was to convince me that our ignorance of the last sixty years is colossal.'

Lord Stanhope has been reading (1858) the 'Tusculan Questions,' and confides to Mr. Gladstone's sympathetic ear Cicero's shockingly faulty recollection of Homer,—mistaking Euryclea for Anticlea, the nurse for the mother, and giving to Polyphemus a speech that Polyphemus never spoke. A bishop says Macaulay told him that one of the most eloquent passages in the English language is in Barrow's Seventy-Fifth Sermon, on the Nativity—'Let us consider that the Nativity doth

import the completion of many ancient promises. . . .'[1] Letters abound and over-abound on that most movable of topics—'the present state of the Homeric controversy.' Scott, the lexicographer, sends him Greek epigrams on events too fugitive to be now worth recalling—discusses Homeric points, and while not surrendering at discretion, admits them worthy of much consideration. There are many pages from Thirlwall, that great scholar and enlightened man, upon points of Homeric ethnology, Homeric geography, and such questions as whether a line in the *Iliad* (xiv. 321) makes the mother of Minos to be a Phœnician damsel or the daughter of Phœnix, or whether it is possible to attach a meaning to ἐννέωρος that would represent Minos as beginning his reign when nine years old—a thing, the grave bishop adds, even more strange than the passion of Dante for Beatrice at the same age.

Huxley sends him titles of books on the origin of the domestic horse; Sir Joseph Hooker supplies figures of the girth of giant trees; the number of annual rings in a fallen stump which would seem to give it 6420 years; tells him how the wood of another was as sound after 380 years as if just felled. Somebody else interests him in Helmholtz's experiments on the progression of the vibrations of the true vowel sounds. Letters pass between him and Darwin (1879) on colours and names for colours. Darwin suggests the question whether savages have names for shades of colours: 'I should expect that they have not, and this would be remarkable, for the Indians of Chili and Tierra del Fuego have names for every slight promontory and hill to a marvellous degree.' Mr. Gladstone proposes to nominate him a trustee of the British Museum (April 1881), and Darwin replies, 'I would gladly have accepted, had my strength been sufficient for anything like regular attendance at the meetings.' Professor Owen thanks him for the honour of Knight of the Bath, and expresses his true sense of the aid and encouragement that he has uniformly received from Mr. Gladstone throughout the course of the labours from which he is now retiring.

He corresponds with a learned French statesman, not on the insoluble Newfoundland problem, turning so much on the nice issue whether a lobster is a fish, and not on the vexed Egyptian question, but on the curious prohibition of pork as an article of food—a strange contradiction between the probable practice of the Phœnicians and that of the Jews, perpetuated in our times through all Musulman countries, and a prohibition not to be explained on sanitary grounds, because to the present day Christians in the East all indulge in pork and are none the worse for it. A young member of parliament one night fell into conversation with him, as a branch from the subject of the eating of bovine flesh by the Greeks, on the eating of

[1] Barrow's *Works*, iv. p. 107 (ed. 1830).

horseflesh, and the next day writes to mention to him that at a council in 785 with the Bishop of Ostia as president, it was decreed, 'Many among you eat horses, which is not done by any Christians in the East: avoid this'; and he asks Mr. Gladstone whether he believed that by reason of the high estimation in which the Greeks held the horse, they abstained from his flesh. Mr. Gladstone (August 1889) replies that while on his guard against speaking with confidence about the historic period, he thought he was safe in saying that the Greeks did not eat the horse in the heroic period, and he refers to passages in this book and the other. 'It was only a conjecture, however, on my part that the near relation of the horse to human feeling and life may probably have been the cause that prevented the consumption of horse-flesh.' In a further letter he refers his correspondent to the closing part of the *Englishman in Paris* for some curious particulars on hippophagy. Then he seems to have interested himself in a delicate question as to the personal claims of Socrates in the light of a moral reformer, and the sage's accommodation of moral sentiment to certain existing fashions in Athenian manners. But as I have not his side of the correspondence, I can only guess that his point was the inferiority of the moral ideals of Socrates to those of Christ. Gustave d'Eichthal, one of the celebrated group of Saint-Simonians who mingled so much of what was chimerical with much that was practical and fruitful, draws the attention of Mr. Gladstone, statesman, philosopher, and hellenist to writings of his own on the practical use of Greek, as destined to be the great national language of humanity, perhaps even within the space of two or three generations. Guizot begs him to accept his book on Peel; and thanking him for his article on the 'Royal Supremacy' (Feb. 9, 1864), says further what must have given Mr. Gladstone lively satisfaction:—

> Like you, I could wish that the anglican church had more independence and self-government; but such as it is, and taking all its history into account, I believe that of all the Christian churches, it is that in which the spiritual régime is best reconciled with the political, and the rights of divine tradition with those of human liberty. . . . I shall probably send you in the course of this year some meditations on the essence and history of the Christian religion. Europe is in an anti-Christian crisis; and having come near the term of life, I have it much at heart to mark my place in this struggle.

For some reason Henry Taylor encloses him (April 5, 1837), 'a letter written by Southey the other day to *a wild girl* who sent him some rhapsodies of her writing, and told him she should be in an agony till she should receive his opinion of them.' This recalls a curious literary incident, for the 'wild girl' was Charlotte Brontë, and Southey warned her that 'literature cannot be the business of a woman's life and ought not to be,' and yet his letter was both sensible and kind, though

as time showed it was a bad shot.[1] Thackeray has been asked to breakfast but 'I only got your note at 2 o'clock this afternoon, when the tea would have been quite cold; and next Thursday am engaged to lecture at Exeter, so that I can't hope to breakfast with you. I shall be absent from town some three weeks, and hope Mrs. Gladstone will permit me to come to see her on my return.' Froude, who was often at his breakfasts, gives him a book (year doubtful):—'I took the liberty of sending it you merely as an expression of the respect and admiration that I have felt towards you for many years,'—sentiments that hardly stood the wear and tear of time and circumstance.

In 1850 what Macaulay styles a most absurd committee was appointed to devise inscriptions for medals to be given to the exhibitors at the great world-show of next year. Its members were, besides Macaulay himself and Gladstone, Milman, Liddell, Lyttelton, Charles Merivale. Milman bethought him of looking into Claudian, and sent to Mr. Gladstone three or four alternative lines fished out from the last of the poets of Roman paganism. Macaulay had another idea;—

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—I am afraid that we must wait till Thursday. I do not much like taking words from a passage certainly obscure and probably corrupt. Could we not do better ourselves? I have made no Latin verses these many years. But I will venture. I send you three attempts:—

Pulcher et ille labor, pulchros ornare labores.
Pulchrum etiam, pulchros palma donare labores.
Pulchrum etiam, pulchris meritam decernere palmam.

You will easily make better. If we can produce a tolerable line among us, we may pretend, as Lauder did, that it is in Staphorstius or Masenius.—Yours ever, T. B. MACAULAY.

Francis Newman, the cardinal's high-minded and accomplished brother, writes to Mr. Gladstone (1878) in a strain of exalted recognition of his services to the nation, and quotes (a little oddly perhaps) the beautiful lines in Euripides, foretelling the approaching triumph of Dionysus over his mortal foe.[1]

The poets are not absent. Wordsworth, as we have already seen (i. p. 269 *n.*) sends to him at the board of trade his remonstrance and his sonnet on the railway into Windermere. Tennyson addresses to him for his personal behoof the sonnet upon the Redistribution bill of 1884–

'Steersman, be not precipitate in thine act
Of steering . . .'

[1] See Southey's *Life*, vi. p. 327.

[2] εὐδαίμων μὲν ὃς ἐκ θαλάσσας
ἔβυγε χείμα, λιμένα δ' ἔκιχεν·
εὐδαίμων δ' ὃς ὑπερθε μόχθων
ἐγένετο.

'Happy the man who from out the floods has fled the storm and found the haven; happy too is he who has surmounted toil and trouble.'—*Bacchae*, 902-5.

and on a sheet of note-paper at a later date when Irish self-government was the theme, he copies the Greek lines from Pindar, 'how easy a thing it is even for men of light weight to shake a state, how hard to build it up again.'[1] Rogers (1844) insists that, 'if one may judge from experience, perhaps the best vehicle in our language for a translator of verse is prose. He who doubts it has only to open his Bible. . . . Who could wish the stories of Joseph and of Ruth to be otherwise than they are. Or who but would rejoice if the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were so translated. I once asked Porson to attempt it, and he seemed to like the idea, but said that it would be a labour of ten or twelve years.'

There was one true poet, and not only a poet but a man, as we now see, with far truer insight into the intellectual needs of his countrymen than any other writer of the closing quarter of the century, who is sometimes supposed to have been overlooked by Mr. Gladstone. And here in the Octagon is Matthew Arnold's letter soliciting his recommendation (1867) for the strictly prosaic post of librarian of the House of Commons, which happily he did not obtain. The year before, Arnold had wished to be made a commissioner under the Endowed Schools Act, but a lawyer was rightly thought necessary by Lord Russell or his advisers, and there is no good reason to suppose that Mr. Gladstone meddled either way. He was responsible in 1882 for a third disappointment, but here again it has been truly said that to appoint to the charity commission a man of sixty, who had no intimate knowledge of charity law, and who had recently in his articles irritated all the nonconformists in England by his ironical references to dissent and dissenters, would not have been conducive to the efficient transaction of public business. A year later Mr. Gladstone proffered him, and his friends made him accept, a civil list pension of two hundred and fifty pounds a year, 'in public recognition of service to the poetry and literature of England.' Arnold in a letter here tries to soften Mr. Gladstone's heart on the subject of copyright, on which, as I often made bold to tell him, he held some rather flagrant heresies. Here the poet begs the minister to consider whether an English author ought not to have property in his work for a longer time than he has now. 'For many books the sale begins late, the author has to create, as Wordsworth said, the taste by which he is to be enjoyed. Such an author is surely the very man one would wish to protect.' I fear he made no convert.

Another poet, with no eye on patronage or pension, hopes to be permitted to say (1869), 'how very many of your countrymen whom you have forgotten or never saw, follow your noble and courageous development of legislation with the same

[1] Pyth. iv. 485; *Life of Tennyson*, ii. pp. 332, 308. Mr. Gladstone's share in the pensions to Wordsworth and Tennyson is described in Mr. Parker's *Peel*, iii. pp. 437-442.

personal devotion, gratitude, and gladness that I feel.' Then five years later he still assures him that among men of letters he may have antagonists but he cannot have enemies—rather a fine distinction, with painfully little truth in it as things happened.

To Miss Martineau, who had done hard work in more than one good cause, he proposes a pension, which she honourably declines :—'The work of my busy years has supplied the needs of a quiet old age. On the former occasions of my declining a pension I was poor, and it was a case of scruple (possibly cowardice). Now I have a competence, and there would be no excuse for my touching the public money. You will need no assurance that I am as grateful for your considerate offer, as if it had relieved me of a wearing anxiety.'

In 1885 he wrote to Mr. Watts, the illustrious painter, to request, with the sanction of the Queen, that he would allow himself to be enrolled among the baronets of the United Kingdom. 'It gives me lively pleasure,' he said, 'to have the means of thus doing honour to art in the person of so distinguished a representative of the noble pursuit.' Mr. Watts, in words that I am permitted to transcribe, declined ; as he did also a second time in 1894 when the proposal was repeated.

While I feel very strongly, and acknowledge with sincere gratitude, that you have honoured in my person, making me a sort of standard bearer, the pursuit of art for its own sake, and have so afforded an enduring encouragement to those who, like myself, may be willing to relinquish many good and tangible things for purposes believed to be good, but not likely to meet with general sympathy, still, I feel it would be something like a real disgrace to accept for work merely attempted, reward and payment only due to work achieved. . . . I should have the ghost of the Lycian chief reproaching me in my dreams ! Also the objects to which I wish to dedicate the rest of my life will best be carried out in quiet and obscurity, so please do not be vexed with me if I again beg respectfully and gratefully to decline. . . . Sarpedon's words[1] always ring in my ears, and so I think you will understand the things I cannot attempt to say. . . . I am so far from undervaluing distinctions that I should like to be a Duke, and deserve the title. . . . Still, it is true that, living mainly in a world of my own, my views are narrowed (I hope I may also say simplified), till a sense of the four great conditions which to my mind comprise all that can be demonstrated of our existence, Life and Death, Light and Darkness, so dominate my mental vision that they almost become material entities and take material forms, dwarfing and casting into shadow ordinary considerations. Over the two first, human efforts broadly speaking avail nothing : but we have it in our power to modify the two last (of course I include in the terms all that belongs to good and bad, beauty and ugliness). Labouring by the side of the poet and the statesman, the artist may deal with those great issues, and here I think the art of England has been at fault. . . . Your overestimate of

[1] The glorious lines of the Lycian chief in *Iliad*, xii. 322-8, valiantly repeated, by the way, by Carteret, as he lay dying, and the very essence and spirit of the minister to whom Mr. Watts was writing.

my work has hastened the execution of an intention I have long had, and which indeed amounts to retirement from the ranks of professional men. I have concluded, dating from June, to undertake no portraits and accept no commissions, but, contented with the little I have to live upon, work only with the idea of making my efforts worthy, at least as efforts, of the nation's acceptance alike before and after my death.

'You have adopted a resolution,' said Mr. Gladstone in his reply, 'of the kind that makes the nineteenth century stare or blink, as those blink who stand in a great brightness and have not eyes for it. The course that you purpose is indeed a self-denying, an unworldly, and a noble one.'

One packet touches a matter that at the moment did Mr. Gladstone some harm in the judgment of men whose good opinion was worth having. In 1873 John Stuart Mill died, and a public memorial was proposed. Mr. Gladstone intimated that he was willing to co-operate. Then a liberal clergyman attacked the obituary notice in the *Times* as too frigid, and the author of the notice retorted by tales of Mill's early views on the question of population. He was well acquainted with Mr. Gladstone, and set busily to work to persuade him that Mill in his book on political economy advocated obnoxious checks, that he was vaguely associated with American publications on the matter, and that he did not believe in God, which was not to the point. Mr. Gladstone passed on this tissue of innuendo to the Duke of Argyll. The Duke reported that he had consulted men thoroughly conversant both with Mill and his writings; that he was assured no passage could bear the construction imputed, and that the places which he had himself looked into, clearly referred to prudential restraints on marriage. Certainly a school of social economy that deals only with foreign exchanges and rent and values and the virtues of direct taxes and indirect, and draws the curtain around the question of population, must be a singularly shallow affair. The Duke of Argyll manfully brushed wasps aside, and sent his subscription. So did men as orthodox as Lord Salisbury, and as cautious as Lord Derby. Mr. Gladstone on the other hand wrote to the promoters of the memorial: 'In my view this painful controversy still exists. I feel that it is not possible for me, situated as I am at the present time, to decide it or to examine it with a view to decision. The only course open to me is to do no act involving a judgment either way, and, therefore, while I desire to avoid any public step whatever, I withdraw from co-operation, and request that my name may be no further mentioned.' Unfortunately, the withdrawal of such a name could not be other than a public step. To say, moreover, that the controversy still existed, was to go a longish way in public opinion towards deciding it. The curious thing is that Mr. Gladstone had known Mill so well—his singleminded love of truth, his humanity, his passion for justice—as to call him by the excellent

name of 'the Saint of Rationalism.' A saint of any sort is surely uncommon enough in our fallen world, to claim an equity that is not refused to sinners. Yet fifteen years later he wrote a letter doing Mill more justice. 'Of all the motives, stings, and stimulants,' he wrote, 'that reach men through their egoism in parliament, no part could move or even touch him. His conduct and his language were in this respect a sermon. Again, though he was a philosopher he was not, I think, a man of crotchets. He had the good sense and practical tact of politics, together with the high independent thought of a recluse.'[1]

A learned unitarian (Beard) sends him a volume of Hibbert lectures. 'All systems,' Mr. Gladstone writes in acknowledging it, 'have their *slang*, but what I find in almost every page of your book is that you have none.' He complains, however, of finding Augustine put into a leash with Luther and Calvin. 'Augustine's doctrine of human nature is substantially that of Bishop Butler; and he converted me about forty-five years ago to Butler's doctrine.' Of far earlier date than this (1839) is an interesting letter from Montalembert:—

London, July 4, 1839.—It seems to me that amidst many *dissentimens*, and although you pass generally in this country for an enemy to my faith and my church, there is a link between us; since admitting every superiority of talent and influence on your side, we stand on the same ground in public life—that of the inalienable rights of spiritual power. I have, therefore, received your book with gratitude, and read it with the sincerest interest. I now take the liberty of offering you a portion of the work I have published, not on matter of actual controversy, but on an unknown and delightful subject of religious history. If you ever find leisure enough to throw a glance on the *History of St. Elizabeth*, and more particularly on the *Introduction*, which is a rapid *résumé* of the thirteenth century, you will perhaps gain some slight information on what the Rev. Hugh McNeile so appropriately called 'the filth and falsehood of the middle ages,' in his splendid speech on church extension, at Freemasons' Hall a few days ago. And allow me to add, my dear sir, with the utter frankness which I cannot divest myself of, that what you seem to me to stand the most in need of at present, is a deeper and more original knowledge of the laws and events of Catholic Europe.

Then come others, recalling illustrious names and famous events in English history. There are a dozen letters of business (1837-1846) from the Duke of Wellington. The reader may be curious to see the earliest communication between two such men:—

London, Nov. 27, 1837.—I have by accident mislaid the petition from the Cape of Good Hope, if it was ever sent me. But I shall be happy to see you and converse with you upon the subject; and consider whether it is desirable or possible that I can bring the subject before the consideration of the House of Lords at the same time that you will in the H. of C. I would propose to you to come here, or that I should

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Mr. W. L. Courtney, Sept. 5, 1888.

go to you to-morrow, Tuesday, at any hour you will name.—I have the honour to be, dear sir, your most faithful, humble servant,

WELLINGTON.[1]

Once he uses his well-known laconic style—

Strathfieldsaye, January 3, 1842.—F.M. the Duke of Wellington presents his compliments to Mr. Gladstone. He has received Mr. Gladstone's letter of the 1st inst. He begs leave to decline to interfere in any manner in the matter to which Mr. Gladstone's letter refers.

What the matter was we cannot tell; but we may guess that it was perhaps less tersely propounded. The rest touch military affairs in the colonies, and are now of no concern.

Here we have a last vision of one of the forlorn shadows of ruined power :—

Chislehurst, le 5 *Juillet*, 1871.—Monsieur le Ministre, j'ai reçu la copie du nouveau Ballot bill que votre excellence a bien voulu m'envoyer et je profite de cette occasion pour vous dire combien je suis touché des marques d'attention que je reçois en Angleterre. Je vous prie de recevoir l'assurance de mes sentimens de haute estime.

NAPOLÉON.

Notes from and to his illustrious adversary in the stirring arena of public life are not without a delicate accent of pathos and sincerity. The first was on some occasion of Mrs. Disraeli's illness,[2] the second on her death :—

Nov. 20, 1867.—I was incapable yesterday of expressing to you how much I appreciate your considerate sympathy. My wife had always a strong personal regard for you, and being of a vivid and original character, she could comprehend and value your great gifts and qualities. There is a ray of hope under this roof since the last four and twenty hours: round your hearth, I trust, health and happiness will be ever present.—Yours sincerely, B. DISRAELI.

Six years later when Lady Beaconsfield died, Mr. Gladstone wrote (Jan. 19, 1873) :—

DEAR MR. DISRAELI,—My reluctance to intrude on the sacredness and freshness of your sorrow may now, I think, properly give way to a yet stronger reluctance to forego adding our small but very sincere tribute of sympathy to those abundant manifestations of it which have been yielded in so many forms. You and I were, as I believe, married in the same year. It has been permitted to both of us to enjoy a priceless boon through a third of a century. Spared myself the blow which has fallen on you, I can form some conception of what it must have been and must be. I do not presume to offer you the consolation which you will seek from another and higher quarter. I offer only the assurance which all who know you, and all who knew Lady Beaconsfield, and especially those among them who like myself enjoyed for a length of time her marked, though unmerited regard, may perhaps tender without impropriety, the assurance that in this trying hour they feel deeply for you and with you.—Believe me, sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE.

[1] See above, vol. i. p. 105.

[2] Referred to by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons, Nov. 19, 1867.

Hughenden Manor, Jan. 24, 1873.—DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—I am much touched by your kind words in my great sorrow. I trust, I earnestly trust, that you may be spared a similar affliction. Marriage is the greatest earthly happiness, when founded on complete sympathy. That hallowed lot was mine, and for a moiety of my existence; and I know it is yours.—With sincere regard, D.

A last note, with the quavering pen-strokes of old age (Nov. 6, 1888), comes from the hand, soon to grow cold, of one who had led so strange a revolution, and had stood for so much in the movement of things that to Mr. Gladstone were supreme:—

It is a great kindness and compliment your wishing to see me. I have known and admired you so long. But I cannot write nor talk nor walk, and hope you will take my blessing, which I give from my heart. —Yours most truly, JOHN H. CARD. NEWMAN.

So the perpetual whirl of life revolves, 'by nature an unmanageable sight,' but—

> Not wholly so to him who looks
> In steadiness; who hath among least things
> An under-sense of greatest; sees the parts
> As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.[1]

Such steadiness, such under-sense and feeling of the whole, was Mr. Gladstone's gift and inspiration, never expending itself in pensive musings upon the vain ambitions, illusions, cheats, regrets of human life—such moods of half-morbid moralising were not in his temperament—but ever stirring him to duty and manful hope, to intrepid self-denial and iron effort.

[1] *The Prelude*, vii.

CHAPTER IV

EASTERN QUESTION ONCE MORE

(*1876–1877*)

The dead have been awakened—shall I sleep?
The world's at war with tyrants—shall I crouch?
The harvest's ripe—and shall I pause to reap?
I slumber not—the thorn is in my couch:
Each day a trumpet soundeth in mine ear,
Its echo in my heart.

BYRON.

PRESERVED in the Octagon is a large packet of notes on 'Future Retribution,' and on them is the docket, '*From this I was called away to write on Bulgaria.*' In the spring of 1876 the Turkish volcano had burst into flame. Of the Crimean war the reader has already seen enough and too much.[1] Its successes, in Mr. Gladstone's words, by a vast expenditure of French and English life and treasure, gave to Turkey, for the first time perhaps in her bloodstained history, twenty years of a repose not disturbed either by herself or by any foreign power. As Cobden and Bright had foreseen, as even many European statesmen who approved the war on grounds of their own had foreseen, Turkish engagements were broken, for this solid reason if for no other that Turkey had not in the resources of her barbaric polity the means to keep them.

Fierce revolt against intolerable misrule slowly blazed up in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a rising in Bulgaria, not dangerous in itself, was put down by Turkish troops despatched for the purpose from Constantinople, with deeds described by the British agent who investigated them on the spot, as the most heinous crimes that had stained the history of the century. The consuls of France and Germany at Salonica were murdered by the Turkish mob. Servia and Montenegro were in arms. Moved by these symptoms of a vast conflagration, the three imperial courts of Russia, Austria, and Germany agreed upon an instrument imposing on the Turk certain

[1] Vol. i. pp. 353 and 388.

reforms, to be carried out under European supervision. To this instrument, known as the Berlin memorandum, England, along with France and Italy, was invited to adhere (May 13). The two other Powers assented, but Mr. Disraeli and his cabinet refused,—a proceeding that, along with more positive acts, was taken by the Turk and other people to assure the moral support of Great Britain to the Ottoman, and probably to threaten military support against the Russian.

This rejection of the Berlin memorandum in May marked the first decisive moment in British policy. The withdrawal of England from the concert of Europe, the lurid glare of the atrocities in Bulgaria, and his abiding sense of the responsibility imposed upon us by the Crimean war and all its attendant obligations, were the three main elements in the mighty storm that now agitated Mr. Gladstone's breast. Perhaps his sympathies with the Eastern church had their share. In a fragment of reminiscence twenty years after, he says:—

When, in 1876, the eastern question was forced forward by the disturbances in the Turkish empire, and especially by the cruel outrages in Bulgaria, I shrank naturally but perhaps unduly from recognising the claim they made upon me individually. I hoped that the ministers would recognise the moral obligations to the subject races of the east, which we had in honour contracted as parties to the Crimean war and to the peace of Paris in 1856. I was slow to observe the real leanings of the prime minister, his strong sympathy with the Turk, and his mastery in his own cabinet. I suffered others, Forster in particular, to go far ahead of me. At the close of the session [1876] a debate was raised upon the subject, and I had at length been compelled to perceive that the old idol was still to be worshipped at Constantinople, and that, as the only person surviving in the House of Commons who had been responsible for the Crimean war and the breaking of the bulwark raised by the treaty of Kainardji on behalf of the eastern Christians, I could no longer remain indifferent. Consequently in that debate Mr. Disraeli had to describe my speech as the only one that had exhibited a real hostility to the policy of the government. It was, however, at that time an opposition without hope. I went into the country, and had mentally postponed all further action to the opening of the next session, when I learned from the announcement of a popular meeting to be held in Hyde Park that the question was alive.[1] So I at once wrote and published on the Bulgarian case. From that time forward, till the final consummation in 1879-80, I made the eastern question the main business of my life. I acted under a strong sense of individual duty without a thought of leadership; nevertheless it made me again leader whether I would or no. The nation nobly responded to the call of justice, and recognised the brotherhood of man. But it was the nation, not the classes. When at the close of the session of 1876, there was the usual dispersion in pursuit of recreation, I thought the occasion was bad. It was good, for the nation did not disperse and the human heart was beating. When the clubs refilled in October, the Turkish cause began

1 Mr. Stead, then at the *Northern Echo* in Darlington, began his redoubtable journalistic career in pressing this question into life.

again to make head. Then came a chequered period, and I do not recollect to have received much assistance from the 'front bench.' Even Granville had been a little startled at my proceedings, and wished me to leave out the 'bag and baggage' from my pamphlet.

Before the end of the session of 1876 Mr. Disraeli quitted the House of Commons and became the Earl of Beaconsfield. Lord Granville informed Mr. Gladstone, on the authority of a high personage, that Disraeli had said to the Queen he must resign; 'that the peerage was then suggested; that at first he said, "Yes, but accompanied with resignation," but was told that in the present state of Europe that was impossible.' In reporting to Sir Arthur Gordon, then abroad, what was not merely a piece of news but an event, Mr. Gladstone says (Aug. 16):—

Disraeli assumes his earldom amidst loud acclaims. I had better be mute about him and his influence generally, except as to a full acknowledgment of his genius and his good points of character. His government is supposed now to stand mainly upon its recent foreign policy: the most selfish and least worthy I have ever known. Whatever was open to any degree of exception in Palmerston, has this year received a tenfold development in Disraeli. Derby's influence, I think, has been for good; but too little of it.

To the Duke of Argyll a couple of days before, he had written:—

I am entirely in harmony with you as to your view of the eastern policy. It has been depressing and corrupting to the country; a healthier air has been generated by indignation at the Bulgarian massacres, which have thrown us back on our rather forgotten humanity. I hope the subject will not slumber through the recess. Dizzy's speech (so I call him with all due respect to the peerage) in the Turkish debate gave me a new light on his views. He is not quite such a Turk as I had thought. What he hates is Christian liberty and reconstruction. He supports old Turkey, thinking that if vital improvements can be averted, it must break down; and his fleet is at Besika Bay, I feel pretty sure, to be ready to lay hold of Egypt as his share. So he may end as the Duke of Memphis yet.

II

Then came the pamphlet. The story of this memorable publication is told in the diary:—

Aug. 28, 1876.—Church 8½ A.M. Worked on a beginning for a possible pamphlet on the Turkish question. I stupidly brought on again my lumbago by physical exertion. Was obliged to put off my pamphlet. Read *The Salvation of all Men* . . . 29.—Kept my bed long. Wrote to Lord Granville, etc. . . . and as a treat began *Waverley* once more. Lumbago bad. 30.—Much bed; forswear all writing. Read St. Thomas Aquinas on the Soul. . . . *Waverley.* A snug evening in the Temple of Peace. 31.—Kept my bed till four, and made tolerable play in writing on Bulgarian horrors. *Sept.* 1.—Wrote [16 letters]. Again worked hard in bed and sent off more than half to the printers.

Read *Waverley*. Short drive with C. 2.—This day I wrote again a good piece of the pamphlet in bed, but improved considerably. Rose at four. Read *Waverley* in the evening. 3.—Hawarden Church 11 A.M. and 6½ P.M. Wrote [16 letters]. Off at 10.15 P.M. for London. 4.—Reached 18 C.H.T. at five in the morning by limited mail; bed till nine. Saw Lord Granville, Mr. Delane, Sir A. Panizzi, Mr. Clowes, Messrs. Murray, the American minister. In six or seven hours, principally at the British Museum, I completed my MS., making all the needful searches of papers and journals. Also worked on proof sheets.

To Mrs. Gladstone.—We had an interesting little party at Granville's. I had a long talk with Delane. We, he and I, are much of one mind in thinking the Turks must go out of Bulgaria, though retaining a titular supremacy if they like. Between ourselves, Granville a little hangs back from this, but he could not persuade me to hold it back.

5.— . . . Saw Lord Granville, Lord Hartington. . . . Finished the correction of revises before one, discussing the text with Lord Granville and making various alterations of phrase which he recommended. At seven I received complete copies. We went to the Haymarket theatre. Arranged my papers after this, and sent off copies in various directions.

The pamphlet spread like fire.[1] Within three or four days of its first appearance forty thousand copies had gone. It was instantly followed up by a tremendous demonstration among his constituents. 'Sept. 9, 1876.—Thought over my subject for Blackheath. Off at two. A very large meeting. The most enthusiastic far that I ever saw. Spoke over an hour.' This is his very prosaic story of the first of those huge and excited multitudes of which for months and years to come he was to confront so many. The pamphlet and the Blackheath speech were his rejoinder to the light and callous tones of Mr. Disraeli, and the sceptical language of his foreign secretary. 'I have a strong suspicion,' he told the Duke of Argyll, who was a fervent sympathiser, 'that Dizzy's crypto-Judaism has had to do with his policy. The Jews of the east *bitterly* hate the Christians; who have not always used them well.' This suspicion was constant. 'Disraeli,' he said to Mrs. Gladstone, 'may be willing to risk his government for his Judaic feeling,—the deepest and truest, now that his wife has gone, in his whole mind.'

The tract beats with a sustained pulse and passion that recalls Burke's letters on the *Regicide Peace*. The exhortation against moral complicity with 'the basest and blackest outrages upon record within the present century, if not within the memory of man'; the branding of the Turkish race as 'the one great anti-human specimen of humanity'; the talk of 'fell satanic orgies'; the declaration that there was not a criminal in a European gaol nor a cannibal in the South Sea Islands, whose indignation would not rise at the recital of that which had been done, which remained unavenged, which had left behind all the foul and all the fierce passions that produced it, and might again spring up in another murderous harvest, from the

[1] *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East.*

soil soaked and reeking with blood, and in the air tainted with every imaginable deed of crime and shame,—all this vehemence was hailed with eager accamation by multitudes who felt all that he felt, and found in his passionate invective words and a voice. Mr. Gladstone was not the man, his readers and his public were not the men, for mere denunciation. They found in him a policy. Indignation, he said in a thoroughly characteristic sentence, indignation is froth, except as it leads to action; mere remonstrance is mockery. There are states of affairs, he told them, in which human sympathy refuses to be confined by the rules, necessarily limited and conventional, of international law. Servia and Montenegro in going to war against Turkey might plead human sympathies, broad, deep, and legitimate, and that they committed no moral offence. The policy of the British government was the *status quo*, 'as you were.' This meant the maintenance of Turkish executive authority. What was really needed was the total withdrawal of the administrative rule of the Turk. And here he used words that became very famous in the controversy:—

But I return to, and end with, that which is the omega as well as the alpha of this great and most mournful case. An old servant of the crown and state, I entreat my countrymen, upon whom far more than perhaps any other people of Europe it depends, to require and to insist that our government which has been working in one direction shall work in the other, and shall apply all its vigour to concur with the other states of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbashis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall I hope clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned.

At Blackheath, under dripping rain clouds, he said the same, though with the invective tempered. 'You shall receive your regular tribute,' he said in slow sentences to imaginary Ottomans, whom he seemed to hold before his visual eye, 'you shall retain your titular sovereignty, your empire shall not be invaded, but never again as the years roll in their course, so far as is it in our power to determine, never again shall the hand of violence be raised by you, never again shall the flood-gates of lust be open to you, never again shall the dire refinements of cruelty be devised by you for the sake of making mankind miserable.'

Once again, it was not words that made the power of the orator, it was the relation in purpose, feeling and conviction between him and his audience. He forced them into unity with himself by the vivid strength of his resolution and imagination; he could not believe that his own power of emotion was not theirs too:—

On Monday morning last between four and five o'clock, I was rattling

down from Euston station through the calm and silent streets of London, when there was not a footfall to disturb them. Every house looked so still, that it might well have been a receptacle of the dead. But as I came through those long lines of streets, I felt it to be an inspiring and a noble thought that in every one of these houses there were intelligent human beings, my fellow-countrymen, who when they woke would give many of their earliest thoughts, aye and some of their most energetic actions, to the terrors and sufferings of Bulgaria.

All this was the very spirit of Milton's imperishable sonnet upon the late Massacre in Piedmont; the spirit that made Cromwell say that the slaughter in the Waldensian valleys 'came as near to his heart as if his own nearest and dearest had been concerned.'

Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who had been one of the most responsible promoters of the policy of the Crimean war, told Mr. Gladstone of his own strong impression (Sept. 10), that the formidable crisis would not have arisen, had England in the first instance taken part with the other Powers. Not that he believed that Russia was always and fully trustworthy, but she was so circumstanced then as to be open to the full bearing of our moral influence. Six weeks later Lord Stratford again expressed his unaltered opinion that if in the beginning England had taken her place at the side of the three emperors, the cloud on the horizon would never have swelled out into its present colossal proportions. 'It seems to me,' he said, 'that Russia has been gradually drawn into a position from which she can hardly retreat with credit.' 'Whatever shades of difference appear in our opinions,' he told Mr. Gladstone in September, 'may be traced in a great measure to your having made Bulgaria the main object of your appeal, whereas the whole eastern question was my theme, and the Bulgarian atrocities, execrable as they were, only a part of it.' The truth was that in making the atrocious doings in Bulgaria the main object of his appeal, Mr. Gladstone had both displayed a sure instinct as to the most effective method of popular approach, and at the same time did justice to his own burning and innate hatred of all cruelty and oppression, whether in Bourbon or Bashi-Bazouk. Humanity was at the root of the whole matter; and the keynote of this great crusade was the association of humanity with a high policy worthy of the British name.

October was passed in a round of visits to great houses, the popular tide in the north still appearing to rise around him. To Lord Granville he writes:—

Alnwick Castle, Oct. 3, 1876.—We have advanced thus far in a northern and eastern tour, and we hope to be at Castle Howard on Wednesday. I left home at this particular time partly with ideas of health and relaxation, partly because I thought that being everywhere and nowhere I should escape a little from the turmoil of the time. Through Cheshire and Lancashire we accomplished the first stage of our journey to Raby

without witnessing any particular indication of public sentiment; and this rather encouraged our extending a little the circle of our visits, which I am now half tempted to regret. For at every point I have had the greatest difficulty in maintaining any show of privacy, and avoiding strong manifestations. I never saw such keen exhibitions of the popular feeling, appearing so to pervade all ranks and places. A tory county member said to my wife two days ago, 'If there were a dissolution now, I should not get a vote.' This may be in some degree peculiar to the northerners with their strong character and deep emotions. . . .

Castle Howard, Oct. 7, 1876.—Before receiving your letter of the 5th, I had been driven to the conclusion that I must make a further utterance, following the actual course of the transactions. And upon the whole I adhere to this conclusion, notwithstanding your opinion to which I attach great weight. There is a great difference in our situations, which I think accounts for this difference of view. I found Ailesbury, of course, full of friendship and loyalty to you, but disposed to regret that you had not been able to see your way to a more advanced and definite policy. I told him that I found no cause for surprise in your reserve, and thought you held yourself in hand for the purpose of holding your party in hand—a view which I think he more or less embraced. Now, I have not your responsibilities to the party, but I have for the moment more than your responsibilities to the country, in this sense that I feel myself compelled to advise from time to time upon the course of that national movement which I have tried hard to evoke, and assisted in evoking. I regard myself as an outside workman, engaged in the preparation of materials, which you and the party will probably have to manipulate and then to build into a structure. For though I do not wish to shut the door upon the government, I despair of them, after so many invitations and so many refusals. . . .

To Madame Novikoff, a Russian lady who at this time began to exercise a marked influence upon the opinions of important men with much influence on the opinions of many other people,[1] he indicated some doubtful symptoms :—

Hawarden, Oct. 17, 1876.—There is an undoubted and smart rally on behalf of Turkey in the metropolitan press. It is in the main representative of the ideas and opinions of what are called the upper ten thousand. From this body there has never on any occasion within my memory proceeded the impulse that has prompted, and finally achieved, *any* of the great measures which in the last half century have contributed so much to the fame and happiness of England. They did not emancipate the dissenters, Roman catholics, and Jews. They did not reform the parliament. They did not liberate the negro slave. They did not abolish the corn law. They did not take the taxes off the press. They did not abolish the Irish established church. They did not cheer on the work of Italian freedom and reconstitution. Yet all these things have been done; and done by other agencies than theirs, and despite their opposition. When I speak of *them*, I speak of course of the majority among them. Unhappily, the country is understood abroad mainly through the metropolitan press.

[1] The story of the heroic death of Colonel Kiréeff, her brother, was vividly told by Kinglake in the introduction to the cabinet edition of his *Invasion of the Crimea*. This episode is supposed by some to have helped to intensify Mr. Gladstone's feeling on the issues of the eastern war.

He was no sooner back at Hawarden than he fell to work on subsidiary branches of the question of questions.

Oct. 22.—Worked hard and finished my paper on Russia in Turkestan, and sent it off. Criminal justice on Sunday! But it is for peace. 24.—To London. 27.—Up at 6. Went with Harry to Dover, saw him off on board the packet and pier [on his way to India]. Drove over to Walmer, reviewed the place, saw Lord Granville and Sir W. James. Returned to London, and at 9.30 to the Gaiety, saw a miserable burlesque of which I had heard a most inviting but false account. 28.—To Hawarden. 31.—Tennyson and H. T. came. *Nov.* 1.—Tennyson read to us his *Harold*. It took near 2½ hours. Walk with him and a party. 2.—Read Bagehot on Lord Spencer's *Life*—very clever, very imperfect. Conversation with Tennyson on future retribution and other matters of theology. He has not thought, I conceive, systematically or thoroughly upon them, but is much alarmed at the prospect of the loss of belief. He left us at one. Walk and long conversation with Lord Acton, who seems in opinion to go beyond Döllinger, though in certain things he stops short of him. 8.—Read aloud the debate of the first *Iliad* from Pope. 9.—Read aloud my version of the Assembly—*Iliad* I. 10.—Read aloud Lord Derby's and Cowper's version of the Assembly. 14.—The Olympian part of *Iliad* I. in Pope's version aloud, and then my own. 17.—We went to Liverpool, where we attended the theatre to see Pennington in *Hamlet*. It was really excellent. I never was so well received in that town. 21.—Finished revision of my MS., 'The Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem,' and sent it to press.

III

At the Lord Mayor's feast in November, the prime minister used menacing language. The policy of England, he said, was peace, but no country was so well prepared for war as ours. If England were to enter into a righteous war, her resources were inexhaustible. 'She is not a country that, when she enters into a campaign, has to ask herself whether she can support a second or a third campaign. She enters into a campaign which she will not terminate till right is done.' This was a hardly veiled threat to Russia, it was encouragement to Turkey, it was incitement to a war party in Great Britain. 'The provocation offered by Disraeli at the Guildhall,' wrote Mr. Gladstone, 'is almost incredible. Some new lights about his Judaic feeling in which he is both consistent and conscientious have come in upon me.'

Still the general feeling was strongly adverse to any action on behalf of Turkey. Mr. Gladstone eagerly noted even the most trivial incident that pointed this way. 'Yesterday night' he wrote (Nov. 26), 'in the tory town of Liverpool, when Othello was being acted, and the words were reached "The Turks are drowned," the audience rose in enthusiasm and interrupted the performance for some time with their cheering. These things are not without meaning.' Men who commonly stood aside from political activity were roused. 'Mr. Carlyle,' says Mr. Ruskin, 'Mr. Froude, and several other men of credit-

able name gathered together at call of Mr. Gladstone as for a great national need, together with other men of more retired mind—Edward Burne-Jones for one, and myself for another.'

The reply to the Guildhall speech was a conference at St. James's Hall (Dec. 8), one of the most remarkable gatherings of representative men of every type and from every part of the kingdom ever held in this country. 'I have most flourishing accounts of the progress of preparations for the conference of which I have been a promoter from the beginning. They urge me to speak on the 8th, but I should much prefer that others should put themselves in the foreground.' Besides the eminent politicians, great territorial magnates were there, and men of letters, and divines of various churches, and men who had never been to a militant assembly in their lives before,—all with a resolute purpose expressed by Mr. Trevelyan, 'No matter how the prime minister may finger the hilt of the sword, the nation will take care that it never leaves the scabbard.' Mr. Gladstone reached London a day or two before. On the 8th, he enters :—

8.—Made notes and extracts for speech. Attended the meetings at St. James's Hall, 12-1½ and 4-8. Spoke (I fear) 1½ hours with some exertion, far from wholly to my satisfaction. The meetings were great, notable, almost historical.

The day after this important and impressive gathering he was back at Hawarden, busy at his article upon the life of the Prince Consort. Then came Christmas day,—'The most solemn I have known for long; I see that eastward sky of storm and of underlight!'

At a suggestion from the London foreign office, a conference of the great Powers met at Constantinople in the middle of December. Lord Salisbury went as the representative of England. To a correspondent Mr. Gladstone spoke of this as an excellent selection :—

I think it right at once to give you my opinion of Lord Salisbury, whom I know pretty well in private. He has little foreign or eastern knowledge, and little craft; he is rough of tongue in public debate, but a great gentleman in private society; he is very remarkably clever, of unsure judgment, but is above anything mean; has no Disraelite prejudices; keeps a conscience, and has plenty of manhood and character. In a word the appointment of Lord Salisbury to Constantinople is the best thing the government have yet done in the eastern question.

As the conference met, so it ran a usual course, and then vanished. The Powers were in complete accord as to the demands that were to be made upon Turkey for the protection of the unfortunate Christian rayahs. The Turk in just confidence that he should find a friend, rejected them, and the envoys departed to their homes. Mr. Gladstone, however, found comfort in the thought that by the agitation two points

had been gained: the re-establishment of the European concert, and extrication from a disgraceful position of virtual complicity with Turkey.

In the spring of 1877 he wrote a second pamphlet,[1] because a speech in the House could not contain detail enough, and because parliamentary tradition almost compelled a suspension of discussion while ministers were supposed to be engaged in concert with other Powers in devising a practical answer to Russian inquiry. He found that it 'produced no great impression,' the sale not going beyond six or seven thousand copies. Still, the gain remained from the proceeding in the autumn, that the government dared not say they had nothing to do with the condition of the Christian rayahs of Turkey, and any idea of going to war for Turkey was out of the question.

Public feeling had waxed very hot, yet without any clear precision of opinion or purpose on the side opposed to Mr. Gladstone's policy of emancipation. Dean Church (Dec. 1876) describes how 'everybody was very savage with everybody about Turks and Russians: I think I never remember such an awkward time for meeting people (until you know you are on the same side) except at the height of the Tractarian row.'[2]

A little later we have one of the best pictures of him that I know, from the warm and vivid hand of J. R. Green, the historian:—

Feb. 21, 1877.—Last night I met Gladstone—it will always be a memorable night to me; Stubbs was there, and Goldwin Smith, and Humphry Sandwith, and Mackenzie Wallace, whose great book on Russia is making such a stir, besides a few other nice people; but one forgets everything in Gladstone himself, in his perfect naturalness and grace of manner, his charming abandon of conversation, his unaffected modesty, his warm ardour for all that is noble and good. I felt so proud of my leader—the chief I have always clung to through good report and ill report—because, wise or unwise as he might seem in this or that, he was always noble of soul. He was very pleasant to me, and talked of the new historic school he hoped we were building up as enlisting his warmest sympathy. I wish you could have seen with what a glow he spoke of the Montenegrins and their struggle for freedom; how he called on us who wrote history to write what we could of that long fight for liberty! And all through the evening not a word to recall his greatness amongst us, simple, natural, an equal among his equals, listening to every one, drawing out every one, with a force and a modesty that touched us more than all his power.

In another letter, says the same ardent man, 'I begin to see that there may be a truer wisdom in the "humanitarianism" of Gladstone than in the purely political views of Disraeli. The sympathies of peoples with peoples, the sense of a common humanity between nations, the aspirations of nationalities after

[1] *Lessons in Massacre.* [2] Church, *Life*, p. 252.

freedom and independence, *are* real political forces; and it is just because Gladstone owns them as forces, and Disraeli disowns them, that the one has been on the right side, and the other on the wrong in parallel questions such as the upbuilding of Germany or Italy. I think it will be so in this upbuilding of the Sclave.'[1]

It was my own good fortune to pass two days with him at this moment at High Elms. Huxley and Playfair were of the party. Mr. Gladstone had with him the printer's proofs of his second pamphlet, and was in full glow against Turkish terrorism and its abettors. This strong obsession could not be concealed, nor was there any reason why it should be; it made no difference in his ready courtesy and kindness of demeanour, his willingness to enter into other people's topics, his pliant force and alacrity of mind. On the Sunday afternoon Sir John Lubbock, our host, took us all up to the hill-top whence in his quiet Kentish village Darwin was shaking the world. The illustrious pair, born in the same year, had never met before. Mr. Gladstone as soon as seated took Darwin's interest in lessons of massacre for granted, and launched forth his thunderbolts with unexhausted zest. His great, wise, simple, and truth-loving listener, then, I think, busy on digestive powers of the drosera in his green-house, was intensely delighted. When we broke up, watching Mr. Gladstone's erect alert figure as he walked away, Darwin, shading his eyes with his hand against the evening rays, said to me in unaffected satisfaction, 'What an honour that such a great man should come to visit me!' Too absorbed in his own overwhelming conflict with the powers of evil, Mr. Gladstone makes no mention of his afternoon call, and only says of the two days that 'he found a notable party, and much interesting conversation,' and that he 'could not help liking' one of the company, then a stranger to him. In his absence at church, we were talking of the qualities that send men forward and keep them back. 'I should like to know,' cried Huxley, 'what would keep such a man as that back,' pointing to where Mr. Gladstone had been sitting; 'why, put him in the middle of a moor, with nothing in the world but his shirt, and you could not prevent him from being anything he liked.' And Huxley was as far as possible from being a Gladstonian.

IV

Events meanwhile had moved. The failure of the conference in December, and the futility of an instrument known as the London protocol devised in March, led up to a declaration of war by Russia against Turkey in April.

We now come to an episode in this controversy, that excited lively passions at the moment, and subjected Mr. Gladstone's

[1] *Letters of J. R. Green*, pp. 446-7.

relation to his party to a strain that would have been profoundly painful, if his heroic intensity had not for the time taken him beyond the region of pain and pleasure.

To Lord Granville. 73 *Harley Street, April* 23, 1877.—The protocol, the refusal of Turkey, the insistence of Russia, have been followed to-night by the announcement that the Russian Chargé has suspended relations with Turkey. Is not the moment now come for raising the rather stiff question whether a policy, or a substantive motion, is to be submitted to parliament? I hold back from a conclusion as long as I can, that I may benefit by the views of others. But it is perfectly plain that Salisbury is at a discount, and that the government grow more Turkish every day; reasonably plain that some grave arguments against moving have now lost their force. My own inclination is towards a series of resolutions with such points as are rudely indicated on the enclosed scrap. Please to let me have it again at some time; I have no copy.

To the Duke of Argyll. April 26, 1877.—I have drawn some resolutions of which I intend to give notice to-day unless the leaders will move. If they will move, though they may say much less, I can support them and express my fuller ideas in a speech. I cannot leave my bed, but notice will be given in my name.

From the Diary. April 27, 1877.—Ill in the night; kept my bed. Saw Dr. Clark twice. Saw Mr. Goschen, Lord Wolverton, Mr. Bright, Lord Frederick Cavendish. This day I took my decision, a severe one, in face of my not having a single approver in the *upper* official circle. But had I in the first days of September asked the same body whether I ought to write my pamphlet, I believe the unanimous answer would have been No. Arranged for the first (general) notice to be given, in my absence.

The resolutions were five in number, and the pith of them was, first, an expression of complaint against the Porte; second, a declaration that, in the absence of guarantees on behalf of the subject populations, the Porte had lost all claim to support, moral or material; third, a desire that British influence should be employed on behalf of local liberty and self-government in the disturbed provinces; fourth, this influence to be addressed to promoting the concert of the Powers in exacting from the Porte such changes as they might deem to be necessary for humanity and justice; fifth, an address to the crown accordingly. On the expediency of these resolutions, at a moment when a war with many complexities had just broken out, opinion in the party was divided. The official liberals and their special adherents doubted. The radicals below the gangway, headed by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, supported the resolutions with enthusiasm. Adverse notices of the previous question were put upon the paper. Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone (May 2) that his colleagues on the front opposition bench had met, and were still of opinion 'that it was not opportune at this moment to move resolutions, and thought that the least antagonistic course as regarded you

would be to vote for one of the motions announced for the previous question.' To the Duke of Argyll Mr. Gladstone wrote on the 4th :—

Our friends of the late cabinet have fallen into a sad series of errors, some of which I fear will be greatly resented in the country. To meet on Wednesday; to use the private pressure which is being used, as I am told, against the resolutions; and above all to have announced the result of the meeting in the papers of yesterday; these form a combination, in my opinion, deplorable and almost incredible. I shall do all in my power to avert consequences, but my difficulties are greatly increased.

It looked as if a mortal split within the party were inevitable.

From the Diary. May 5.—The post brought me near 140 letters to-day which took some hours to examine, but they are most remarkable. Saw Lord Granville with Lord Wolverton. They opened the means of bridging over the chasm inadvertently made; and I readily went into the scheme. It was carried through by Granville at a meeting of his friends after the Academy dinner, and he came to me at Wolverton's with Hartington to make known the result and consider some details of execution. What they ask of me is really, from my point of view, little more than nominal. They have in truth been awakened as from a slumber by the extraordinary demonstrations in the country. 3-4½ attended the Academy exhibition. 6½-10¼ at the dinner; spoke for literature! My reception surprised me, it was so good.

What was asked was that he should consent to an amended form of his second resolution, declaring more simply and categorically that the Turk, by his misgovernment, had lost his claims. As to the other resolutions, according to a common usage, it was at his choice to accept a division on the first or first two, and not divide upon the rest. His speech, of course, would cover the ground of all the resolutions. This reduction was, as he truly said, 'little more than nominal.' A friendly question was to be put when the time came, and in reply he would state how things stood.

The critical day arrived, and not often has parliamentary excitement been so high. It was a battle of high national and even European policy, for England was now at the front; it was a battle between two sections of a party; it was the ordeal of a man admitted to be the greatest in the House, and perhaps some of the onlookers felt much like the curious Florentines, as they wondered what would happen to Savonarola and the monks in the great Trial by Fire.

From the Diary. May 7.—This day came in about 100 meetings and say 200 letters or 250. Worked hard upon the blue book, and references and notes for speech. House at 4¼. For over two hours I was assaulted from every quarter, except the opposition bench which was virtually silent. Such a sense of solitary struggle I never remember. At last I rose on the main question nearly in despair as to the result; but resolved at least not to fail through want of effort. I spoke 2½ hours, voice lasting well.

House gradually came round and at the last was more than good. It was over at 9.30. Never did I feel weaker and more wormlike. Dinner at Sir W. James's and H. of C. again $10\frac{3}{4}$-$12\frac{3}{4}$. 8.—I am the spoiled child of sleep. This night was an exception.

The scene began with the question as preconcerted, put by Mr. Trevelyan. Such moves never fail to provoke some measure of mockery, and this time both regular opponents and opponents in more or less disguise thought that they had got the monarch of the forest down. The situation was one that opened the way for Mr. Gladstone's love of over-precision, and his various explanations prolonged the wrangle. It lasted until the dinner-hour. 'While many members,' says one observer, 'were streaming out to dine and those who remained looked dejectedly at their watches, Mr. Gladstone, who is sixty-eight years of age, sprang again to his feet, and without any sign of diminished spirit delivered a noble speech lasting two hours and a half. It was perhaps the greatest triumph of irrepressible moral and physical vitality over depressing conditions that was ever won in the House of Commons.'[1]

The record of a distinguished eyewitness, himself one day to be prime minister, ought not to be omitted :—

> There was one of those preliminary parliamentary debates—or series of debates—which preceded the main business of the evening. In this Mr. Gladstone had to speak not once or twice, but several times, and it was not until hour after hour had passed in this preliminary skirmish in a House hostile, impatient, and utterly wearied, that he got up to present his case with that conviction that he was right, which was his great strength as a speaker in and out of the House. I never shall forget the impression that speech left on my mind. As a mere feat of physical endurance it was almost unsurpassed ; as a feat of parliamentary courage, parliamentary skill, parliamentary endurance, and parliamentary eloquence, I believe it will always be unequalled.[2]

As he drew to his close, he looked, according to Mr. Forster, '*like an inspired man*,' and I have heard many hearers of cool temperament declare the passage about the Montenegrins and onwards, to have been the most thrilling deliverance that could ever be conceived. Here is this noble peroration :—

> Sir, there were other days when England was the hope of freedom. Wherever in the world a high aspiration was entertained, or a noble blow was struck, it was to England that the eyes of the oppressed were always turned—to this favourite, this darling home of so much privilege and so much happiness, where the people that had built up a noble edifice for themselves would, it was well known, be ready to do what in them lay to secure the benefit of the same inestimable boon for others. You talk to me of the established tradition and policy in regard to Turkey. I appeal to an established tradition older, wider, nobler far—a tradition not which disregards British interests, but which teaches you to seek the promotion of these interests in obeying the dictates of honour and justice. And, sir, what is to be the end of this? Are we to dress up

[1] *Spectator*. [2] Mr. Balfour, House of Commons, May 20, 1898.

the fantastic ideas some people entertain about this policy and that policy in the garb of British interests, and then, with a new and base idolatry, fall down and worship them? Or are we to look, not at the sentiment, but at the hard facts of the case, which Lord Derby told us fifteen years ago—viz., that it is the populations of those countries that will ultimately possess them—that will ultimately determine their abiding condition? It is to this fact, this law, that we should look. There is now before the world a glorious prize. A portion of those unhappy people are still as yet making an effort to retrieve what they have lost so long, but have not ceased to love and to desire. I speak of those in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another portion—a band of heroes such as the world has rarely seen—stand on the rocks of Montenegro, and are ready now, as they have ever been during the 400 years of their exile from their fertile plains, to sweep down from their fastnesses and meet the Turks at any odds for the re-establishment of justice and of peace in those countries. Another portion still, the 5,000,000 of Bulgarians, cowed and beaten down to the ground, hardly venturing to look upwards, even to their Father in heaven, have extended their hands to you; they have sent you their petition, they have prayed for your help and protection. They have told you that they do not seek alliance with Russia, or with any foreign power, but that they seek to be delivered from an intolerable burden of woe and shame. That burden of woe and shame—the greatest that exists on God's earth—is one that we thought united Europe was about to remove; but to removing which, for the present, you seem to have no efficacious means of offering even the smallest practical contribution. But, sir, the removal of that load of woe and shame is a great and noble prize. It is a prize well worth competing for. It is not yet too late to try to win it. I believe there are men in the cabinet who would try to win it, if they were free to act on their own beliefs and aspirations. It is not yet too late, I say, to become competitors for that prize; but be assured that whether you mean to claim for yourselves even a single leaf in that immortal chaplet of renown, which will be the reward of true labour in that cause, or whether you turn your backs upon that cause and upon your own duty, I believe, for one, that the knell of Turkish tyranny in these provinces has sounded. So far as human eye can judge, it is about to be destroyed. The destruction may not come in the way or by the means that we should choose; but come this boon from what hands it may, it will be a noble boon, and as a noble boon will gladly be accepted by Christendom and the world.

V

The division, after a debate that lasted five days, resulted in 354 for ministers, against 223 for Mr. Gladstone.

'Of course if you had gone on alone,' Lord Granville told him, 'you would only have had either more or less than half the liberal party. If Hartington had moved the first two resolutions, the government would certainly have had some 160 or 170 majority. All the malcontents behind the opposition front benches were obliged to vote on Monday, in consequence of having so vigorously preached allegiance during the previous ten days. As it is, the party voted pretty well.'

'The assumed laughter of the conservatives,' he adds, 'showed

their vexation, and *some* of the radicals showed their cards—that it is not the eastern question, but the hopes of breaking up the party that really excites them.' The radicals on their part were extremely sore at the withdrawal of the resolutions. 'Your goodness,' wrote their leading man to Mr. Gladstone the following day, 'has been abused in the interests of a section of the party who deserve least at your hands. The current report in the lobbies last night, spread by these gentlemen, and easily believed by their friends, was that you had "caved in."' Could he not take some further opportunity of showing that he had not abandoned the policy of joint intervention, and that the liberal party in the country had no reason to regret that they rose almost as one man to his call?

At first it was thought that the discussion had done good by impressing the government with the desire of the country, if not for coercion at least for real neutrality, and that Lord Beaconsfield had submitted to the better influences in the cabinet. It soon appeared that this had not happened. 'The fidelity of the party,' said Lord Granville, 'and the large majority have given Beaconsfield the lead, of which he has not been slow to avail himself. It is very serious.' The war in the Balkans went on; the Turks fought with valour and constancy: sufferings on both sides were frightful. In England the sympathy with the miserable victims of Turkish misrule became modified by the re-awakened jealousy of Russian power. Mr. Gladstone held his ground with invincible tenacity against all comers. He took his share in such parliamentary operations as were possible, but these operations were necessarily fruitless, and the platform now for the first time since the long campaign against the corn laws became the effective field for moving national opinion.

Great parties of tourists from the northern and midland towns began to make it a fashion to go on high pilgrimage to Hawarden, where besides a fine park they saw the most interesting man in the country, and had a good chance of hearing an eloquent speech, or watching a tree fall under the stroke of his vigorous arm. If they brought him the tribute of a casket or an axe or some cunning walking stick, he was obliged to thank them, and if he opened his lips to thank them, the all-engrossing theme was sure to well up. Some of these earnest utterances jarred even on his admirers in the press and out of it. Just so would critics in colleges and cathedral closes have found Wesley and Whitefield in their evangelising mission north, south, east and west, excessive, exaggerated, indiscreet, and deficient in good taste. They could not understand how one supposed to be so knowing in all the manœuvres of parliament and party, was at the same time so naïf. This curious simplicity in fact marked him in all the movements into which he put his heart. Like every other

grand missionary—the abolitionist, the gospel missionary, the free trader, the peace man, the temperance man—he could not believe that the truths, arguments, and appeals, of which he was the bearer, could fail to strike in all who heard them the same fire that blazed in bosoms fervid as his own.

He went to Birmingham and was received with tumultuous acclamations by many tens of thousands :—

May 31.—[Hawarden]. Off before 11. Reached Birmingham at 3¼. A triumphal reception. Dinner at Mr. Chamberlain's. Meeting 7 to 9½, half occupied by my speech. A most intelligent and duly appreciative audience—but they were 25,000 and the building I think of no acoustic merits, so that the strain was excessive. A supper followed. *June* 1.—Breakfast party 9.30. Much conversation on the Birmingham school board system. Off at 10.45 to Enfield Factory, which consumed the forenoon in a most interesting survey with Colonel Dickson and his assistants. Then to the fine (qy. overfine ?) board school, where addresses were presented and I spoke over half an hour on politics. After luncheon to the town hall ; address from the corporation, made a municipal speech of say 20 minutes. A good deal of movement in the streets with us even to-day. Thence to the Oratory and sat with Dr. Newman.[1] Saw Mr. Chamberlain's very pleasing children. Then to the dinner, spoke again. To Hagley at 11.5.

Well was it said of this visit by Dale, that strenuous wholehearted man, 'Forsaken or but feebly supported by many of those with whom he had shared many glorious conflicts, and who owed to him their place and fame, his courage remained undaunted, and his enthusiasm for righteousness and freedom unquenched.'

Mr. Gladstone described the general situation in a letter to a correspondent out of England :—

I cannot say much for the conduct of the Powers. That of the pope and his court has been vile ; Manning and most part of Ireland have followed suit ; France and Germany are thinking of themselves and one another ; and Italy, for fear of the pope, is obliged to look very much to Germany. Austria is to some extent in a false position. For us there is no excuse : there was no difficulty whatever in our doing our duty. I have said in parliament, and I deeply feel, it is the most deplorable chapter of our foreign policy since the peace of 1815. The good cause has been further weakened by the bad conduct, in varying degrees, of many races, Magyars and Jews above all. You see I cannot help filling up my paper with this subject.

In July he made a pleasure trip in one of Sir Donald Currie's steamers from London to Dartmouth. 'We set out at 10.20,' he says, 'for the docks. Started in the *Dublin Castle* at noon. We spent the night at the Nore, good weather, kind reception,

[1] At this interview Mr. Chamberlain was present. He had asked Mr. Gladstone what he would like to do or see in Birmingham. Mr. Gladstone said he thought he should like to call upon Dr. Newman. The wonderful pair were nervous and constrained, and each seemed a little relieved when, after twenty minutes of commonplace conversation, they rose to part.

splendid fare. The Cape deputies came with us as far as Gravesend.' Among these deputies was Mr. Kruger.

In October he paid his first and only visit to Ireland. It lasted little more than three weeks, and did not extend beyond a very decidedly English Pale. He stayed in great houses, was feasted by the provost of Trinity, in spite of disestablishment, and he had a friendly conversation with Cardinal Cullen, in spite of Vaticanism. 'You know, Mr. Gladstone,' said the Cardinal, 'we could have given you a warmer reception if it had not been for certain pamphlets which we in Ireland did not like very well.' He received the freedom of the city of Dublin, broke bread with the Duke of Marlborough at the vice-regal lodge, admired the picturesque site of the castle at Kilkenny, enjoyed sympathetic talks with host and hostess at Abbeyleix, and delighted in the curious antiquities and exquisite natural beauties of the county of Wicklow. Of the multitudes of strange things distinctively Irish, he had little chance of seeing much.

CHAPTER V

A TUMULTUOUS YEAR

(*1878*)

On these great questions, which cut so deep into heart and mind, the importance of taking what they think the best course for the question will often seem, even to those who have the most just sense of party obligation, a higher duty than that of party allegiance.—GLADSTONE (*to Granville*, 1878).

OF 1878 Mr. Gladstone spoke as 'a tumultuous year.' In January, after a fierce struggle of five months in the Balkan passes, the Russian forces overcame the Turkish defence, and by the end of January had entered Adrianople and reached the Sea of Marmora. Here at San Stefano a treaty of peace was made at the beginning of March. The last word of the eastern question, as Lord Derby said in those days, is this: Who is to have Constantinople? No great Power would be willing to see it in the hands of any other great Power, no small Power could hold it at all, and as for joint occupation, all such expedients were both dangerous and doubtful.[1] This last word now seemed to be writing itself in capital letters. Russia sent the treaty to the Powers, with the admission that portions of it affecting the general interests of Europe could not be regarded as definitive without general concurrence. A treaty between Russian and Turk within the zone of Constantinople and almost in sight of St. Sophia, opened a new and startling vista to English politicians. Powerful journalists, supposed to be much in the confidence of ministers, declared that if peace were ultimately concluded on anything like the terms proposed, then beyond all doubt the outworks of our empire were gone, and speedy ruin must begin. About such a situation there had been but one opinion among our statesmen for many generations. Until Mr. Gladstone, 'all men held that such a state of things [as the Russians at Constantinople] would bring the British empire face to face with ruin.'[2]

Before the treaty of San Stefano, an angry panic broke out

[1] *Speeches of the Fifteenth Earl of Derby*, i. p. 297.
[2] *Pall Mall Gazette*, Feb. 26, 1878.

in parts of England. None of the stated terms of British neutrality were violated either by the treaty or its preliminaries, but even when no Russian force was within forty miles of Constantinople, the cabinet asked for a vote of six millions (January), and a few days later the British fleet passed the Dardanelles. Two years earlier, Mr. Gladstone had wished that the fleet should go to Constantinople as a coercive demonstration against the Porte; now, in 1878, the despatch of the fleet was a demonstration against Russia, who had done alone the work of emancipation that in Mr. Gladstone's view should have been done, and might have been done without war by that concert of the Powers from which England had drawn back. The concert of the Powers that our withdrawal had paralysed would have revived quickly enough, if either Austria or Germany had believed that the Czar really meant to seize Constantinople. 'I have done my best,' wrote Mr. Gladstone to a friend, 'against the vote of six millions; a foolish and mischievous proposition. The liberal leaders have, mistakenly as I think, shrunk at the last moment from voting. But my opinion is that the liberal party in general are firmly opposed to the vote as a silly, misleading, and mischievous measure.' He both spoke and voted. The opinion of his adherents was that his words, notwithstanding his vote, were calculated to do more to throw oil on the troubled waters, than either the words or the abstention of the official leader.

The appearance of the British fleet with the nominal object of protecting life and property at Constantinople, was immediately followed by the advance of Russian troops thirty miles nearer to Constantinople with the same laudable object. The London cabinet only grew the wilder in its projects, among them being a secret expedition of Indian troops to seize Cyprus and Alexandretta, with the idea that it would be fairer to the Turk not to ask his leave. Two ministers resigned in succession, rather than follow Lord Beaconsfield further in designs of this species.[1]

'It is a bitter disappointment,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to Madame Novikoff, 'to find the conclusion of one war, for which there was a weighty cause, followed by the threat of another, for which there is no adequate cause at all, and which will be an act of utter wickedness—if it comes to pass, which God forbid—on one side or on both. That unhappy subject of the bit of Bessarabia,[2] on which I have given you my mind with great freedom (for otherwise what is the use of my writing at all?) threatens to be in part the pretext and in part the cause of enormous mischief, and in my opinion to mar and taint at a particular point the immense glory which Russia had acquired,

[1] Lord Carnarvon resigned in January 1878 when the fleet was ordered to the Dardanelles, and Lord Derby in March on the calling out of the reserves.

[2] Russia demanded from Turkey the Dobrudscha in order to cede it to Roumania in exchange for the Roumanian province of Bessarabia.

already complete in a military sense, and waiting to be consummated in a moral sense too.'

Public men do not withstand war fevers without discomfort, as Bright had found in the streets of Manchester when he condemned the Crimean war. One or two odious and unusual incidents now happened to Mr. Gladstone :—

Feb. 24.—Between four and six, three parties of the populace arrived here, the first with cheers, the two others hostile. Windows were broken and much hooting. The last detachment was only kept away by mounted police in line across the street both ways. This is not very sabbatical. There is strange work behind the curtain, if one could only get at it. The instigators are those really guilty ; no one can wonder at the tools.

One Sunday afternoon a little later (March 4) :—

Another gathering of people was held off by the police. I walked down with C., and as a large crowd gathered, though in the main friendly, we went into Dr. Clark's, and then in a hansom off the ground.

Stories were put about that Lord Beaconsfield reported the names of dissentient colleagues to the Queen. Dining with Sir Robert Phillimore (Jan. 17), Mr. Gladstone—

was emphatic and decided in his opinion that if the premier mentioned to the Queen any of his colleagues who had opposed him in the cabinet, he was guilty of great baseness and perfidy. Gladstone said he had copies of 250 letters written by him to the Queen, in none of which could a reference be found to the opinion of his colleagues expressed in cabinet.

On the same occasion, by the way, Sir Robert notes :—'Gladstone was careful to restrain the expression of his private feelings about Lord Beaconsfield, as he generally is.'

II

In the summer the famous congress assembled at Berlin (June 13 to July 13), with Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury as the representatives of Great Britain, to sanction, reject, or modify the treaty of San Stefano. Before the congress met, the country received a shock that made men stagger. While in London it was impossible to attempt to hold a meeting in favour of peace and even in the northern towns such meetings were almost at the mercy of anybody who might choose to start a jingo chorus ; while the war party exulted in the thought that military preparations were going on apace, and that the bear would soon be rent by the lion ; a document was one afternoon betrayed to the public, from which the astounding fact appeared that England and Russia had already entered into a secret agreement, by which the treaty of San Stefano was in substance to be ratified, with the single essential exception that the southern portion of Bulgaria was to be severed from the northern. The treaty of Berlin became in fact an extensive partition of the Turkish empire, and the

virtual ratification of the policy of bag and baggage. The Schouvaloff memorandum was not the only surprise. Besides the secret agreement with Russia, the British government had made a secret convention with Turkey. By this convention England undertook on terms to defend Turkey against Russian aggression in Asia, though concessions were made to Russia that rendered Asiatic Turkey indefensible; and Turkey was to carry out reforms which all sensible men knew to be wholly beyond her power. In payment for this bargain, the Sultan allowed England to occupy and administer Cyprus.

At the end of the session Mr. Gladstone wound up his labours in Parliament with an extraordinarily powerful survey of all these great transactions. Its range, compass, and grasp are only matched by the simplicity and lucidity of his penetrating examination. It was on July 30:—

Finished the protocols and worked up the whole subject. It loomed very large and disturbed my sleep unusually. H. of C. Spoke 2½ hours. I was in body much below par, but put on the steam perforce. It ought to have been far better. The speech exhausted me a good deal, as I was and am below par.

He sketched, in terse outline, the results of the treaty—the independence of Roumania, Servia, and Montenegro; the virtual independence of northern Bulgaria; the creation in southern Bulgaria (under the name of Eastern Roumelia) of local autonomy, which must soon grow into something more. Bosnia and Herzegovina, though Mr. Gladstone would have hoped for their freedom from external control, had been handed over to Austria, but they were at any rate free from the Ottoman. The cardinal fact was that eleven millions of people formerly under Turkish rule, absolute or modified, were entirely exempted from the yoke. 'Taking the whole of the provisions of the treaty of Berlin together, I most thankfully and joyfully acknowledge that great results have been achieved in the diminution of human misery and towards the establishment of human happiness and prosperity in the East.' A great work of emancipation had been achieved for the Slavs of the Turkish empire. He deplored that equal regard had not been paid to the case of the Hellenes in Thessaly and Epirus, though even in 1862 Palmerston and Russell were in favour of procuring the cession of Thessaly and Epirus to Greece. As for the baffling of Russian intrigue, it was true that the Bulgaria of Berlin was reduced from the Bulgaria of San Stefano, but this only furnished new incentives and new occasions for intrigue.[1] Macedonia and Armenia were left over.

On the conduct of the two British plenipotentiaries at Berlin he spoke without undue heat, but with a weight that impressed even adverse hearers:—

[1] As it happened, the severance of northern from southern Bulgaria only lasted seven years.

I say, sir, that in this congress of the great Powers, the voice of England has not been heard in unison with the institutions, the history, and the character of England. On every question that arose, and that became a subject of serious contest in the congress, or that could lead to any important practical result, a voice has been heard from Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury which sounded in the tones of Metternich, and not in the tones of Mr. Canning, or of Lord Palmerston, or of Lord Russell. I do not mean that the British government ought to have gone to the congress determined to insist upon the unqualified prevalence of what I may call British ideas. They were bound to act in consonance with the general views of Europe. But within the limits of fair differences of opinion, which will always be found to arise on such occasions, I do affirm that it was their part to take the side of liberty; and I do also affirm that as a matter of fact they took the side of servitude.

The agreement with Russia had in truth constantly tied their hands. For instance, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury might make to Russia as many eloquent speeches as they liked against the restoration of Bessarabia, but everybody in the room knew that the British government had taken the lead in virtually assuring Russia that she had only to hold to her point and Bessarabia should again be hers. Most effective of all was his exposure of the convention with Turkey, a proceeding by which he had undertaken, behind the back of Europe and against the treaty of Paris, to establish a sole protectorate in Asiatic Turkey.[1] We had made a contract of such impossible scope as to bind us to manage the reform of the judicature, the police, the finances, the civil service of Turkey, and the stoppage of the sources of corruption at Constantinople. The load, if we took it seriously, was tremendous; if we did not take it seriously, then what was the whole story of the reform of Asiatic Turkey, but a blind to excuse the acquisition of Cyprus? This great presentation of a broad and reasoned case contained a passage near its close, that had in it the kernel of Mr. Gladstone's policy in the whole controversy that was now drawing to an end:—

I think we have lost greatly by the conclusion of this convention; I think we have lost very greatly indeed the sympathy and respect of the nations of Europe. I do not expect or believe that we shall fall into that sort of contempt which follows upon weakness. I think it to be one of the most threadbare of all the weapons of party warfare when we hear, as we sometimes hear, on the accession of a new government, that before its accession the government of England had been despised all over the world, and that now on the contrary she has risen in the general estimation, and holds her proper place in the councils of nations. This England of ours is not so poor and so weak a thing as to depend upon the reputation of this or that administration; and the world knows pretty well of what stuff she is made. . . . Now, I am desirous

[1] Mr. Gladstone made an important speech on the treaty-making power on June 13, 1878.

that the standard of our material strength shall be highly and justly estimated by the other nations of Christendom; but I believe it to be of still more vital consequence that we should stand high in their estimation as the lovers of truth, of honour, and of openness in all our proceedings, as those who know how to cast aside the motives of a narrow selfishness, and give scope to considerations of broad and lofty principle. I value our insular position, but I dread the day when we shall be reduced to a moral insularity. . . . The proceedings have all along been associated with a profession as to certain British interests, which although I believe them to be perfectly fictitious and imaginary, have yet been pursued with as much zeal and eagerness as if they had been the most vital realities in the world. This setting up of our own interests, out of place, in an exaggerated form, beyond their proper sphere, and not merely the setting up of such interests, but the mode in which they have been pursued, has greatly diminished, not, as I have said, the regard for our material strength, but the estimation of our moral standard of action, and consequently our moral position in the world.

Lord Beaconsfield lost some of his composure when Mr. Gladstone called the agreement between England and Turkey an insane convention. 'I would put this issue,' he said, 'to an intelligent English jury: Which do you believe most likely to enter into an insane convention? A body of English gentlemen, honoured by the favour of their sovereign and the confidence of their fellow-subjects, managing your affairs for five years—I hope with prudence, and not altogether without success—or a sophistical rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity,'[1]—and so forth, in a strain of unusual commonness, little befitting either Disraeli's genius or his dignity. Mr. Gladstone's speech three days later was as free from all the excesses so violently described, as any speech that was ever made at Westminster.

No speech, however, at this moment was able to reduce the general popularity of ministers, and it was the common talk at the moment that if Lord Beaconsfield had only chosen to dissolve, his majority would have been safe. Writing an article on 'England's Mission' as soon as the House was up, Mr. Gladstone grappled energetically with some of the impressions on which this popularity was founded. The *Pall Mall Gazette* had set out these impressions with its usual vigour. As Mr. Gladstone's reply traverses much of the ground on which we have been treading, I may as well transcribe it:—

> The liberals, according to that ably written newspaper, have now imbibed as a permanent sentiment a 'distaste for national greatness.' This distaste is now grown into matter of principle. 'The disgust at these principles of action ever grew in depth and extent,' so that in the Danish, the American, and the Franco-German wars, there was 'an increasing portion of the nation ready to engage in the struggle on almost any side,' as a protest against the position that it was bound

[1] At Knightsbridge, July 27, 1878.

not to engage in it at all! The climax of the whole matter was reached when the result of the Alabama treaty displayed to the world an England overreached, overruled, and apologetic. It certainly requires the astounding suppositions, and the gross ignorance of facts, which the journalist with much truth recites, to explain the manner in which for some time past pure rhodomontade has not only done the work of reasoning, but has been accepted as a cover for constant miscarriage and defeat; and doctrines of national self-interest and self-assertion as supreme laws have been set up, which, if unhappily they harden into 'permanent sentiment' and 'matter of principle,' will destroy all the rising hopes of a true public law for Christendom, and will substitute for it what is no better than the Communism of Paris enlarged and exalted into a guide of international relations. It is perhaps unreasonable to expect that minds in the condition of the 'increasing portion' should on any terms accept an appeal to history. But, for the sake of others, not yet so completely emancipated from the yoke of facts, I simply ask at what date it was that the liberal administrations of this country adopted the 'permanent sentiment' and the 'matter of principle' which have been their ruin? Not in 1859-60, when they energetically supported the redemption and union of Italy. Not in 1861, when, on the occurrence of the Trent affair, they at a few days' notice despatched ten thousand men to Halifax. Not when, in concert with Europe, they compelled the sultan to cut off the head of his tyrannical pasha, and to establish a government in the Lebanon not dependent for its vital breath on Constantinople. Not when in 1863 they invited France to join in an *ultimatum* to the German Powers, and to defend Denmark with us against the intrigues which Germany was carrying on under the plea of the Duke of Augustenburg's title to the Duchies; and when they were told by Louis Napoleon in reply that that might be a great British interest, but that it had no significance for France. Not when in 1870 they formed in a few days their double treaty for the defence of Belgium. Does, then, the whole indictment rest on this—that, in conformity with the solemn declaration of the European Powers at Paris in 1856, they cured a deep-seated quarrel with America by submitting to the risk of a very unjust award at Geneva; and reconciled a sister nation, and effected a real forward step in the march of civilization, at about half the cost which the present administration has recently incurred (but without paying it) in agitating and disturbing Europe? Or is it that during all those years, and many more years before them, while liberty and public law were supported, and British honour vindicated, territorial cupidity was not inflamed by the deeds or words of statesmen, British interests were not set up as 'the first and great commandment,' and it was thought better to consolidate a still undeveloped empire, which might well satisfy every ambition, as it assuredly taxes to the utmost every faculty.

III

Though this was a 'tumultuous year,' he noted with some complacency that the work of his pen produced a thousand pounds. He laboured hard at his Homeric primer, 'just contriving to squeeze the completion of it into the Easter recess'; wrote articles on the 'Peace to Come,' on the 'Paths of Honour and of Shame,' on the Abbé Martin, on 'England's Mission,' on

'Electoral Statistics,' the 'Friends and Foes of Russia,' and other matters. He finished a paper on Iris, 'a charming little subject, and for once I am a little pleased with my work.' He toiled diligently at a collection of old articles, which he christened *Gleanings* :—

November 14.—Worked on articles for reprint. Reperusal of Patteson moves me unto tears.[1] What a height he reached! What he did for God and the church. Praise to the Highest in the height! 21.—This morning the rain on the trees was wonderful and lovely. When it fell under the trees in the afternoon it was like snow or small icicles an inch deep. 25.—Read *Maud* once more, and aided by Doyle's criticism wrote my note of apology and partial retractation.[2] The fact is I am wanting in that higher poetical sense, which distinguishes the true artist.

Again and again he gives himself the delightful refreshment of arranging his books. He finds that he has 700 volumes of English poetry. 'After 30 hours my library is now in a passable state, and I enjoy, in Ruskin's words, "the complacency of possession and the pleasantness of order."' He sat to Millais in the summer for what was to be the most popular of his portraits. '*July* 5.—Went with C. to examine the Millais portrait, surely a very fine work. 6.—Sat once more to Millais, whose ardour and energy about his picture inspire a strong sympathy.' On Good Friday he hears Bach's passion music, 'most beautiful, yet not what I like for to-day.' In the afternoon: 'We drove down to Pembroke Lodge. For a few minutes saw Lord Russell at his desire—a noble wreck. He recognised us and overflowed with feeling.'

In December the Argylls and Mr. Ruskin came to Hawarden :—

Dec. 12.—Mr. Ruskin's health better, and no diminution of charm. 14.—Mr. Ruskin at dinner developed his political opinions. They aim at the restoration of the Judaic system, and exhibit a mixture of virtuous absolutism and Christian socialism. All in his charming and modest manner.

From a pleasing account of Ruskin at Hawarden privately printed, we may take one passage :—

Something like a little amicable duel took place at one time between Ruskin and Mr. G., when Ruskin directly attacked his host as a 'leveller.' 'You see *you* think one man is as good as another and all men equally competent to judge aright on political questions; whereas I am a believer in an aristocracy.' And straight came the answer from Mr. Gladstone, 'Oh dear, no! I am nothing of the sort. I am a firm believer in the aristocratic principle—the rule of the best. I am an out-and-out *inequalitarian*,' a confession which Ruskin treated with intense delight, clapping his hands triumphantly.

The true question against Ruskin's and Carlyle's school was how you are to get the rule of the best. Mr. Gladstone

[1] See *Gleanings*, ii. p. 213 [2] *Ibid.* ii. pp. 146-7.

thought that freedom was the answer; what path the others would have us tread, neither Ruskin nor his stormy teacher ever intelligibly told us.

IV

Writing on November 1 to Madame Novikoff, Mr. Gladstone said :—

Nov. 1, '78.—My opinion is that this government is moving to its doom, and I hope the day of Lord Granville's succession to it may be within a twelvemonth. It is not to be desired that this should take place at once. The people want a little more experience of Beaconsfield toryism.

Unfortunately this experience, whatever be the precise name for it, now came with disastrous promptitude, and the nation having narrowly escaped one war, found itself involved in two. The peril of a conflict in Europe had hardly passed, before the country found itself committed to an attack for which the government themselves censured their high-handed agent, upon the fiercest of the savage tribes of South Africa. A more formidable surprise was the announcement that, by a headlong reversal of accepted Indian policy, war had been declared against the Ameer of Afghanistan.

CHAPTER VI

MIDLOTHIAN

(*1879*)

μηδὲ μαλθακὸς γένῃ.
τί δρᾷς ; ἀνίστω, μή σε νικάτω κόπος.
Æsch. *Eum.* 74. 128

Turn not faint of heart. What doest thou? Up and forth!
Let not weariness be thy master.

After the general election of 1874, Mr. Gladstone resolved not again to offer himself as candidate for Greenwich, and in 1878 he formally declined an invitation from the liberals in that constituency. At the end of the year it was intimated to him that he might have a safe seat in the city of Edinburgh without a contest. In January 1879, more ambitious counsels prevailed, and it was resolved by the liberal committee of Midlothian, with Lord Rosebery in the front, and amid infinite resolution, enthusiasm, and solid sense of responsibility, that Mr. Gladstone should be invited to contest the metropolitan county of Scotland. Mr. Adam, the Scotch whip, entered into the design, Lord Wolverton approved, and Lord Granville sent Adam a letter assenting. The sitting member was Lord Dalkeith, eldest son of that Duke of Buccleuch who had been Mr. Gladstone's colleague in Peel's cabinet nearly forty years before, and who had left it in the memorable December of 1845. Parties had always been closely balanced, although the tories had held their own pretty firmly, and only two contests had been fought for forty years. The Midlothian tory was described to Mr. Gladstone as of the hardest and narrowest type, and the battle was therefore sure to be fierce. Some of the voters, however, told the canvassers that they would no longer support ministers. 'If the government continues much longer,' they said, 'the whole nation will be in the poorhouse.' The delight of the constituency was intense at the prospect of having for their champion one whom they described as the greatest living Scotchman, and Adam (January 10, 1879) predicted a majority

of two hundred. Mr. Gladstone rapidly, but not without deliberation, entered into the project. 'I am now only anxious,' he wrote to Mr. Adam (January 11), 'under your advice and Wolverton's, about making the ground sure before the plunge is taken; after it is taken, you may depend on me.' On the same day he wrote to Lord Granville:—

I believe you have been cognizant of the proceedings about the county of Midlothian, which are now beginning to bear a practical aspect. Generally, when one knows the tree is a large tree, yet on coming close up to the trunk it looks twice as large as it did before. So it is with this election. If it goes on, it will gather into itself a great deal of force and heat, and will be very prominent. Thus far I am not sure whether I have put the matter pointedly before you, or have been content to assume your approval of what I found Adam pressing strongly upon me. It will be a tooth and nail affair.

Lord Granville replied, that he was doing a 'very plucky and public-spirited thing.' 'Your friends,' he said, 'must begin working the coach at once, but I should think you had better not appear too early in the field. Act Louis XIV.' 'Having received your approval,' Mr. Gladstone told Lord Granville, 'I wrote on the same day to Adam accordingly.' He then went into details with his usual care and circumspection. When the public were made aware of what was on foot, the general interest became hardly less lively all over the island than it was in the constituency itself. It was observed at the time how impossible many people seemed to find it to treat anything done by Mr. Gladstone as natural and reasonable. Nothing would appear to be a more simple and unobjectionable act than his compliance with the request of the electors of Midlothian, yet 'he was attacked as if he were guilty of some monstrous piece of vanity and eccentricity.'[1] Relentless opponents amused themselves by saying that 'Mr. Gladstone lives personally in Wales and intends to live politically in Scotland; and his most fervently held opinions, like the Celtic population of the island, have very much followed the same line of withdrawal.'

Mr. Gladstone described the general outlook in a letter to his son Henry in India (May 16):—

The government declines, but no one can say at what rate. Elections are tolerably satisfactory to us—not, I think, more. A sure though evil instinct has guided them in choosing rather to demoralise our finance, than to pay their way by imposing taxes, but I do not see how they are long to escape this difficulty. . . . Our people look forward comfortably to the election. The government people say they will not have it this year. But if we come to the conclusion that we ought to have it, I am by no means sure but that though a minority, we can force it by putting our men into the field, and making it too uncomfortable for them to continue twelve or fifteen months in hot water. I am safe in Midlothian, unless they contrive a further and larger number of faggot votes.

[1] Spectator, February 8, 1879.

Adam looked forward with alarm to the mischief that might be done if the general election were to be protracted beyond the autumn of 1880. 'In order to neutralise the present majority,' he told Mr. Gladstone, 'they will have to create faggots to a *disgraceful* extent, but they are not troubled by scruples of conscience.' The charity that thinketh no evil is perhaps less liberally given to party whips than even to other politicians.

Apart from Midlothian Mr. Adam, in January 1879, said to Mr. Gladstone that the liberals were helpless even in the best agricultural counties of England; that he saw no hope of improvement; they had neither candidates nor organization in most of them, and there was no means that he knew of (and he had done all that he could) to wake them up. By November 1879, he reported that he had been carefully over the list, taking a very moderate calculation of the chances at the coming election; and he believed they ought to have a majority of 20 to 30, independent of home rulers. Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville:—

Aug. 6, '79.—Salisbury's speech indicates, and for several reasons I should believe, that they intend sailing on the quiet tack. Having proved their spirit, they will now show their moderation. In other words they want all the past proceedings to be in the main 'stale fish' at the elections. Except financial shuffling they will very likely commit no new enormity before the election. In my view that means they will not supply any new matter of such severe condemnation as what they have already furnished. Therefore, my idea is, we should keep the old alive and warm. This is the meaning of my suggestion as to autumn work, rather than that I expect a dissolution. It seems to me good policy to join on the proceedings of 1876-9 by a continuous process to the dissolution. Should this happen, which I think likely enough about March, there will have been no opportunity immediately before it of stirring the country. I will not say our defeat in 1874 was owing to the want of such an opportunity, but it was certainly, I think, much aggravated by that want.

II

It was on November 24 that Mr. Gladstone soon after eight in the morning quitted Liverpool for Edinburgh, accompanied by his wife and Miss Gladstone. 'The journey from Liverpool,' he enters, 'was really more like a triumphal procession.' Nothing like it had ever been seen before in England. Statesmen had enjoyed great popular receptions before, and there had been plenty of cheering and bell-ringing and torchlight in individual places before. On this journey of a bleak winter day, it seemed as if the whole countryside were up. The stations where the train stopped were crowded, thousands flocked from neighbouring towns and villages to main centres on the line of route, and even at wayside spots hundreds assembled, merely to catch a glimpse of the express as it

dashed through. At Carlisle they presented addresses, and the traveller made his first speech, declaring that never before in the eleven elections in which he had taken part, were the interests of the country so deeply at stake. He spoke again with the same moral at Hawick. At Galashiels he found a great multitude, with an address and a gift of the cloth they manufactured. With bare head in the raw air, he listened to their address, and made his speech; he told them that he had come down expressly to raise effectually before the people of the country the question in what manner they wished to be governed; it was not this measure or that, it was a system of government to be upheld or overthrown. When he reached Edinburgh after nine hours of it, the night had fallen upon the most picturesque street in all our island, but its whole length was crowded as it has never been crowded before or since by a dense multitude, transported with delight that their hero was at last among them. Lord Rosebery, who was to be his host, quickly drove with him amidst tumults of enthusiasm all along the road to the hospitable shades of Dalmeny. 'I have never,' Mr. Gladstone says in his diary, 'gone through a more extraordinary day.'

All that followed in a week of meetings and speeches was to match. People came from the Hebrides to hear Mr. Gladstone speak. Where there were six thousand seats, the applications were forty or fifty thousand. The weather was bitter and the hills were covered with snow, but this made no difference in cavalcades, processions, and the rest of the outdoor demonstrations. Over what a space had democracy travelled, and what a transition for its champion of the hour, since the days half a century back when the Christ Church undergraduate, the disciple of Burke and Canning, had ridden in anti-reform processions, been hustled by reform mobs, and had prayed for the blessing of heaven on the House of Lords for their honourable and manly decision in throwing out the bill. Yet the warmest opponent of popular government, even the Duke of Buccleuch himself, might have found some balm for this extraordinary display of popular feeling, in the thought that it was a tribute to the most splendid political career of that generation; splendid in gifts and splendid in service, and that it was repaid, moreover, with none of the flattery associated with the name of demagogue. Mr. Gladstone's counsels may have been wise or unwise, but the only flattery in the Midlothian speeches was the manly flattery contained in the fact that he took care to address all these multitudes of weavers, farmers, villagers, artisans, just as he would have addressed the House of Commons,—with the same breadth and accuracy of knowledge, the same sincerity of interest, the same scruple in right reasoning, and the same appeal to the gravity and responsibility of public life. An aristocratic minister, speaking at Edinburgh

soon after, estimated the number of words in Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian speeches in 1879 at 85,840, and declared that his verbosity had become 'a positive danger to the commonwealth.' Tory critics solemnly declared that such performances were an innovation on the constitution, and aggravated the evil tendencies of democracy.[1] Talk of this kind did not really impose for an instant on any man or woman of common sense.

Oratory ever since the days of Socrates, and perhaps long before, has been suspected as one of the black arts; and both at the time and afterwards Mr. Gladstone's speeches in his first Midlothian campaign were disparaged, as I have just said, as sentiment rather than politics, as sophistry not sound reason, as illusory enchantment not solid and subsisting truth. We are challenged to show passages destined to immortality. With all admiration for the effulgent catalogue of British orators, and not forgetting Pitt on the slave trade, or Fox on the Westminster scrutiny, or Sheridan on the begums of Oude, or Plunket on the catholic question, or Grattan, or Canning, or Brougham, we may perhaps ask whether all the passages that have arrived at this degree of fame and grandeur, with the exception of Burke, may not be comprised in an extremely slender volume. The statesman who makes or dominates a crisis, who has to rouse and mould the mind of senate or nation, has something else to think about than the production of literary masterpieces. The great political speech, which for that matter is a sort of drama, is not made by passages for elegant extract or anthologies, but by personality, movement, climax, spectacle, and the action of the time. All these elements Midlothian witnessed to perfection.

It was my fortune to be present at one whole day of these performances. 'An overpowering day,' Mr. Gladstone calls it in his diary (December 5, 1879). 'After a breakfast-party,' he says, 'I put my notes in order for the afternoon. At twelve delivered the inaugural address as lord rector of the university' [Glasgow]. This discourse lasted an hour and a half, and themes, familiar but never outworn nor extinct, were handled with vigour, energy, and onward flow that made them sound as good as novel, and even where they did not instruct or did not edify, the noble music pleased. The great salient feature of the age was described as on its material side the constant discovery of the secrets of nature, and the progressive subjugation of her forces to the purposes and will of man. On the moral side, if these conquests had done much for industry, they had done more for capital; if much for labour, more for luxury; they had variously and vastly multiplied the stimulants to gain, the avenues of excitement, the solicitations to pleasure. The universities were in some sort to check all this; the habits of mind formed by universities are founded in sobriety and

[1] *Saturday Review*, November 29, 1879.

tranquillity; they help to settle the spirit of a man firmly upon the centre of gravity; they tend to self-command, self-government, and that genuine self-respect which has in it nothing of mere self-worship, for it is the reverence which each man ought to feel for the nature that God has given him, and for the laws of that nature. Then came an appeal, into which the speaker's whole heart was thrown, for the intellectual dignity of the Christian ministry. If argument failed to the great Christian tradition, he would set small value on the multitude of uninstructed numerical adhesions, or upon the integrity of institutions and the unbroken continuity of rite. 'Thought,' he exclaimed,—'*thought is the citadel.*' There is a steeplechase philosophy in vogue—sometimes specialism making short cuts to the honours of universal knowledge; sometimes by the strangest of solecisms, the knowledge of external nature being thought to convey a supreme capacity for judging within the sphere of moral action and of moral needs. The thing to do is to put scepticism on its trial, and rigorously to cross-examine it: allow none of its assumptions; compel it to expound its formulæ; do not let it move a step except with proof in its hand; bring it front to front with history; even demand that it shall show the positive elements with which it proposes to replace the mainstays it seems bent on withdrawing from the fabric of modern society. The present assault, far from being destined to final triumph, is a sign of a mental movement, unsteady, though of extreme rapidity, but destined, perhaps, to elevate and strengthen the religion that it sought to overthrow. '*In the meantime,*' he said, in closing this branch of his address, '*I would recommend to you as guides in this controversy, truth, charity, diligence, and reverence, which indeed may be called the four cardinal virtues of all controversies, be they what they may.*' This was followed by an ever-salutary reminder that man is the crown of the visible creation, and that studies upon man—studies in the largest sense of humanity, studies conversant with his nature, his works, his duties and his destinies—these are the highest of all studies. As the human form is the groundwork of the highest training in art, so those mental pursuits are the highest which have man, considered at large, for their object. Some excellent admonitions upon history and a simple, moving benediction, brought the oration to an end.

Blue caps as well as red cheered fervently at the close, and some even of those who had no direct interest in the main topics, and were not much or not at all refreshed by his treatment of them, yet confessed themselves sorry when the stream of fascinating melody ceased to flow. Then followed luncheon in the university hall, where the principal, in proposing the lord rector's health, expressed the hope that he had not grudged the time given to the serene, if dull, seclusion of academic things.

'I only quarrel with your word dull,' said Mr. Gladstone in reply. 'Let me assure you, gentlemen, nothing is so dull as political agitation.' By this time it was four o'clock. Before six he was at St. Andrew's Hall, confronting an audience of some six thousand persons, as eager to hear as he was eager to speak ; and not many minutes had elapsed before they were as much aflame as he, with the enormities of the Anglo-Turkish convention, the spurious harbour in Cyprus, the wrongful laws about the press in India, the heavy and unjust charges thrown upon the peoples of India, the baseless quarrel picked with Shere Ali in Afghanistan, the record of ten thousand Zulus slain for no other offence than their attempt to defend against our artillery with their naked bodies their hearths and homes.

Once mentioning a well-known member of parliament who always showed fine mettle on the platform, Mr. Gladstone said of him in a homely image, that he never saw a man who could so quickly make the kettle boil. This was certainly his own art here. For an hour and a half thus he held them, with the irresistible spell of what is in truth the groundwork of every political orator's strongest appeal—from Athenians down to Girondins, from Pericles to Webster, from Cicero to Gambetta —appeal to public law and civil right and the conscience of a free and high-minded people. This high-wrought achievement over, he was carried off to dine, and that same night he wound up what a man of seventy hard-spent years might well call 'an overpowering day,' by one more address to an immense audience assembled by the Glasgow corporation in the city hall, to whom he expressed his satisfaction at the proof given by his reception in Glasgow that day, that her citizens had seen no reason to repent the kindness which had conferred the freedom of their city upon him fourteen years before.

The audience in St. Andrew's Hall at Glasgow was, we may presume, like his audiences elsewhere, and the sources of his overwhelming power were not hard to analyse, if one were in analytic humour. For one thing, the speeches were rallying battle-cries, not sermons, and everybody knew the great invisible antagonist with whom the orator before them was with all his might contending. It was a gleaming array of the political facts of a political indictment, not an aerial fabric of moral abstractions. Nor, again, had the fashion in which Mr. Gladstone seized opinion and feeling and personal allegiance in Scotland, anything in common with the violent if splendid improvisations that made O'Connell the idol and the master of passionate Ireland. One of the most telling speeches of them all was the exposure of the government finance in the Edinburgh corn-exchange, where for an hour and a half or more, he held to his figures of surplus and deficit, of the yield of bushels to the acre in good seasons and bad, of the burden of the income-tax, of the comparative burden per head of new

financial systems and old, with all the rigour of an expert accountant. He enveloped the whole with a playful irony, such as a good-humoured master uses to the work of clumsy apprentices, but of the paraphernalia of rhetoric there is not a period nor a sentence nor a phrase. Fire is suppressed. So far from being saturated with colour, the hue is almost drab. Yet his audience were interested and delighted, and not for a moment did he lose hold,—not even, as one observer puts it, 'in the midst of his most formidable statistics, nor at any point in the labyrinthine evolution of his longest sentences.'

Let the conclusion be good or let it be bad, all was in groundwork and in essence strictly on the plane and in the tongue of statesmanship, and conformable to Don Pedro's rule, 'What need the bridge much broader than the flood?'[1] It was Demosthenes, not Isocrates. It was the orator of concrete detail, of inductive instances, of energetic and immediate object; the orator confidently and by sure touch startling into watchfulness the whole spirit of civil duty in a man; elastic and supple, pressing fact and figure with a fervid insistence that was known from his career and character to be neither forced nor feigned, but to be himself. In a word, it was a man —a man impressing himself upon the kindled throngs by the breadth of his survey of great affairs of life and nations, by the depth of his vision, by the power of his stroke. Physical resources had much to do with the effect; his overflowing vivacity, the fine voice and flashing eye and a whole frame in free, ceaseless, natural and spontaneous motion. So he bore his hearers through long chains of strenuous periods, calling up by the marvellous transformations of his mien a strange succession of images—as if he were now a keen hunter, now some eager bird of prey, now a charioteer of fiery steeds kept well in hand, and now and again we seemed to hear the pity or dark wrath of a prophet, with the mighty rushing wind and the fire running along the ground.

All this was Mr. Gladstone in Midlothian. To think of the campaign without the scene, is as who should read a play by candle-light among the ghosts of an empty theatre. When the climax came, it was found that Mr. Gladstone's tremendous projectiles had pounded the ministerial citadel to the ground, and that he had a nation at his back. What had been vague misgiving about Lord Beaconsfield grew into sharp certainty; shadows of doubt upon policy at Constantinople or Cabul or the Cape, became substantive condemnation; uneasiness as to the national finances turned to active resentment; and above all, the people of this realm, who are a people with rather more than their share of conscience at bottom, were led to consider whether when all is said, there is not still a difference between right and wrong even in the relations of states and the problems

[1] *Much Ado*, Act I. Sc. i.

of empire. It was this last trait that made the atmosphere in which both speaker and his hearers drew their inspiration. It may be true, if we will, that, as a great critic sardonically hints, 'eloquence, without being precisely a defect, is one of the worst dangers that can beset a man.'[1] Yet after all, to disparage eloquence is to depreciate mankind; and when men say that Mr. Gladstone and Midlothian were no better than a resplendent mistake, they forget how many objects of our reverence stand condemned by implication in their verdict; they have not thought out how many of the faiths and principles that have been the brightest lamps in the track of human advance they are extinguishing by the same unkind and freezing breath. One should take care lest in quenching the spirit of Midlothian, we leave sovereign mastery of the world to Machiavelli.

I need not here go through the long list of topics. As an attack upon ministers Mr. Gladstone made out the upshot to be finance in confusion, legislation in arrear, honour compromised by breach of public law, Russia aggrandized and yet estranged, Turkey befriended, as they say, but sinking every year, Europe restless and disturbed; in Africa the memory of enormous bloodshed in Zululand, and the invasion of a free people in the Transvaal; Afghanistan broken; India thrown back. He disclaimed all fellowship with those who believe that the present state of society permits us to make any vow of universal peace, and of renouncing in all cases the policy of war. He enumerated the six principles that he thought to be the right principles for us: to foster the strength of the empire by just laws and by economy; to seek to preserve the world's peace; to strive to the uttermost to cultivate and maintain the principle of concert in Europe; to avoid needless and entangling engagements; to see that our foreign policy shall be inspired by such love of freedom as had marked Canning, Palmerston, Russell; to acknowledge the equal right of all nations. He denounced 'the policy of denying to others the rights that we claim ourselves' as untrue, arrogant, and dangerous. The revival of the analogy of imperial Rome for the guidance of British policy he held up as fundamentally unsound and practically ruinous. For have not modern times established a sisterhood of nations, equal, independent, each of them built up under the legitimate defence which public law affords to every nation living within its own borders, and seeking to perform its own affairs? He insisted that we should ever 'remember the rights of the savage, as we call him.' 'Remember,' he exclaimed, 'that the sanctity of life in the hill villages of Afghanistan, among the winter snows, is as inviolable in the eye of Almighty God as can be your own. Remember that He who has united you as human beings in the same flesh and blood, has bound you by the law of mutual love; that that

[1] Faguet.

mutual love is not limited by the shores of this island, is not limited by the boundaries of Christian civilisation; that it passes over the whole surface of the earth, and embraces the meanest along with the greatest in its unmeasured scope.'

It was this free movement and pure air that gave to the campaign its marking character. The campaign had a soul in it. Men were recalled to moral forces that they had forgotten. In his last speech at Edinburgh, Mr. Gladstone's closing words were these :—

I am sustained and encouraged, and I may almost say driven on in public life, by the sentiment believed and entertained by me most sincerely, whether erroneously or not, that the principles at issue are much broader than those of ordinary contention. . . . I humbly ask for confidence when I state my own belief that the objects we have in view at the present time are objects connected with the welfare of mankind upon the widest scale. . . . Whatever we may say amidst the clash of arms and amidst the din of preparation for warfare in time of peace—amidst all this yet there is going on a profound mysterious movement, that, whether we will or not, is bringing the nations of the civilised world, as well as the uncivilised, morally as well as physically nearer to one another, and making them more and more responsible before God for one another's welfare. . . . I do most heartily thank you for having given me the credit of being actuated by the desire to consider in public transactions the wider interests of mankind, and I venture to assure you that so far as my objects and intentions are concerned, objects of that nature, and nothing meaner or narrower, will ever be taken as the pole-star of my life.

III

Two days after a departure from Glasgow which he calls royal, the unwearied warrior made his way through scenes of endless stir all along the journey, back to his temple of peace at Hawarden (December 8). There he at once resumed his habits of daily industry, revising proofs of speeches 'reaching 255 pages!' placing books and reading them—Catullus, Hodgson's *Turgot*, somebody on Colour Sense, somebody else on Indian finance, Jenkins on Atheism, Bunbury's Geography—and so forth. Also, 'wrote on mythology and on economics; together rather too much. I am not very fit for composition after 5 P.M.' Meanwhile Christmas arrived, and then the eve of his birthday, with its reflections—reflections of one

> 'Who though thus endued as with a sense
> And faculty for storm and turbulence,
> Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans . . .
> Where what he most doth value must be won.'

December 28. . . . And now I am writing in the last minutes of the seventh decade of my life. This closing is a great event. The days of our life are three-score years and ten. It is hardly possible that I should complete another decade. How much or how little of this will God give me for the purposes dear to my heart? Ah! what need have I of what I may term spiritual leisure, to be out of the dust and heat and blast and

strain, before I pass into the unseen world. But perhaps this is a form of self-love. For the last three and a half years I have been passing through a political experience which is, I believe, without example in our parliamentary history. I profess to believe it has been an occasion when the battle to be fought was a battle of justice, humanity, freedom, law, all in their first elements from the very root, and all on a gigantic scale. The word spoken was a word for millions, and for millions who for themselves cannot speak. If I really believe this, then I should regard my having been morally forced into this work as a great and high election of God. And certainly I cannot but believe that He has given me special gifts of strength on the late occasion, especially in Scotland. . . . Three things I would ask of God over and above all the bounty which surrounds me. This first, that I may escape into retirement. This second, that I may speedily be enabled to divest myself of everything resembling wealth. And the third—if I may—that when God calls me He may call me speedily. To die in church appears to be a great euthanasia, but not at a time to disturb worshippers. Such are some of an old man's thoughts, in whom there is still something that consents not to be old.

Among the other books that he had been reading was the biography of one of the closest of his friends, and in the last hours of this *annus mirabilis* he writes :—

Read the *Life of Bishop Wilberforce*. It is indeed an edifying book. I knew him, admired him, loved him living. But the laying out of his full character from early days onwards tells me much I did not know, and lifts upwards my conception of him both in greatness and in goodness.

CHAPTER VII

THE EVE OF THE BATTLE

(*1879*)

Perhaps no man has ever had a mighty influence over his fellows without having the innate need to dominate, and this need usually becomes the more imperious in proportion as the complications of life make Self inseparable from a purpose which is not selfish.—GEORGE ELIOT.

It is interesting to get what light we may on Mr. Gladstone's frame of mind between his first astounding triumph in Midlothian and the crowning mercy of the general election. In October he had written to his son Henry in India as to the probable date of the dissolution, that the government had in his opinion 'to choose between a minor or a less smashing defeat now, or probably a more smashing one after the disclosure and real presentation of their most discreditable finance, which can hardly be delayed beyond the spring.' They had a chance of better trade, but the likelihood also of worse revenue. The great reason against dissolution was that they were in possession, and every day's delay was another day's exercise of power. He then proceeds to mention his personal position :—

They are beginning to ask *who* is to succeed if Beaconsfield is displaced. Voices are coming up here and there, some of them very confident, that the people will call for me. Nothing, however, but a very general, a nearly unanimous, call from the liberals, with the appearance of a sort of national will, could bring this demand to a form in which it could or ought to be obeyed. The reasons against my coming forward are of immense force ; those against my indicating any shadow of desire or willingness to come forward are conclusive. Nor do I at present see any indication of a state of things which would bring it about.

Before leaving Dalmeny at the end of his campaign, Mr. Gladstone wrote a letter to Mr. Bright, a copy of which, along with the reply, and two letters from Lord Wolverton, he left tied up in a separate packet.

To Mr. Bright.

Nov. 28, 1879.—You will probably recollect that during your last visit to Hawarden you suggested to me in a walk the expectation or the possi-

bility that when the return of liberals to power seemed probable, there might be a popular call for my resuming the leadership of the party, and that I stated to you what I believed, and you I think admitted, to be the reasons against it. These, if I remember right, were four, and I attached to them differing degrees of weight.

The first was that my health and strength would be unequal to the strain at my time of life.

The second, that the work to be done was so formidable that hardly any amount of courage availed to look it in the face.

The third, weightier than these, was that a liberal government under me would be the object from the first of an amount and kind of hostility, such as materially to prejudice its acts and weaken or, in given circumstances, neutralise its power for good.

The fourth, that I was absolutely precluded under present circumstances, being bound by the clearest considerations of honour and duty to render a loyal allegiance to Granville as leader of the party, and to Hartington as leader in the Commons, and was entirely disabled from so much as entertaining any proposition that could directly or indirectly tend to their displacement.

There is a fifth consideration that now presses me, of which the grounds had hardly emerged in regard to myself personally at the time when we conversed together. Nothing could be so painful, I may almost say so odious to me, as to force myself, or to be forced, upon the Queen, under circumstances where the choice of another from the ranks of the same party would save her from being placed in a difficulty of that peculiar kind. This, it may be said, belongs to the same category as my first and second objections; but there it is.

The enthusiasm of Scotland is something wonderful. As to the county of Midlothian, I doubt whether the well informed tories themselves in the least expect to win. We go to Taymouth on Monday. I hope you are well and hearty and see cause to be contented with the progress of opinion. The more I think about the matter, the more strange and mysterious does it seem to me that any party in this free nation should be found to sanction and uphold policy and proceedings like those of the last two years in particular. I have written this because I am desirous you should have clearly before you the matter of my conversation with you, and the means of verifying it.

Mr. Bright to Mr. Gladstone.

Rochdale, Dec. 12, 1879.—Perhaps I ought to have written to you sooner to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th ult., but I preferred to let you get home before I wrote, and I was in truth, rather puzzled as to what I ought to say.

You, with sufficient accuracy, describe the purport of your remarks during our conversation when I was with you a year ago. I saw the difficulty, then in the future, now perhaps near upon us. But it is one in which nothing can be done, and 'a masterly inactivity' seems the only wise course. If a break-up of the present concern comes, the Queen will be advised to send for Granville or Hartington. The one sent for will accept and attempt to form a government, or he may have grave doubts, and say that you are the only man, etc.; he will consult the other, and will consult you. Meantime there may be a 'pronouncement' on the part of the people, through the press and public meetings, which

will have a sudden effect on negotiations and on the views of the Queen, and may decide the question. If such a time should come, then you will have to say what is possible, and I hope you will be able to decide rightly, and with reference solely to the interests of the country and the service you owe to the crown as representing the nation. You will act with a most strict honour to Granville and Hartington, as I believe they will act to you. If, as I hope for and believe, no selfish ambition will come in to make mischief, the question will be determined in such a manner as to content all honest men, and what is best for all will be done. I am often asked as to the future. I reply only so as to say nothing to add to the evident difficulty of the situation.

Your Scotch expedition has been one of discovery and of conquest. The tory press and partisans are evidently astonished at it. The government speakers have no new defence, and they want the past to be forgotten. Mr. Smith, first lord, I see, entirely rejoices in what has been done in South Africa, though 'a few lives' have been lost by it. This official life seems sorely to demoralise some homely and decent people. I am fairly well so far during the winter, but I seem feeble when I compare myself with your activity and power. . . . We are to have meetings in Birmingham during January. I should prefer the quiet of obscurity to these meetings. I hope Mrs. Gladstone and your daughter have enjoyed their Scotch trip and are well after it.

Five days later came Lord Wolverton's report of the state of feeling on these delicate topics in high places in London. He had seen Lord Granville on the evening of the 16th :—

To most affectionate inquiries as to your health and powers, I gave a most satisfactory account, and the conversation then went to the question as to the effect which your recent triumphant progress in Midlothian and the North had produced upon your mind. I frankly said that you had in my opinion not anticipated such a marked expression of public feeling, and that it had doubtless tended to lead your mind to the consideration of the position of the party, and to the fact that public opinion might call upon you to an extent which no one could have looked for. I then (with anxiety to convey what I know to be your desire) most earnestly impressed upon Lord Granville that you had upon every occasion when the subject was alluded to, prefaced all you had to say with the strongest expressions of loyalty to Hartington and himself. That I felt convinced that nothing would induce you to encourage, or to even listen to, any attempt which others might make to disturb the existing state of things as to the leadership, unless the wish was very clearly expressed to you by Hartington and himself, and you would demand full proof that their interests and that of the party strongly pointed to the reconsideration of your own position. I need hardly say that, though I felt it my duty to take care that I did not understate your feelings, it was not necessary to reassure Granville upon that point.

The conversation then went to the state of the party and its present position. I learnt that a private meeting had been held at Devonshire House in the morning. I believe Hartington, Granville, Cardwell, Adam, and Harcourt were present. My *impression* is that the advice Adam gave as to the elections, was that 'union in the party at this moment would not be promoted by a change of front.' I do not mean to say that the question of leadership was *actually discussed*, but I *suspect*

the conversation turned somewhat upon the point which you place '*third*' in your letter to Bright. To sum it all up, I do not think you will at present be troubled by any application to you from Granville and Hartington.[1]

The third point in the letter to Mr. Bright was the question whether a liberal government under Mr. Gladstone would not be exposed to a special degree of hostility, due to the peculiar antagonism that his personality excited. In a later letter (December 20), Wolverton tells Mr. Gladstone that in the conversation of the 16th, 'Lord Granville raised the point you made your third in your note to Bright, and that he did converse upon at *some length*, evidently having real fears that many of our weak-kneed ones would feel some alarm if Hartington went from the front *now*, and that the tories would intensify this to the uttermost. I think this was all.' Another sentence indicates Lord Wolverton's own view :—

Lord Granville is not sanguine as to the future. As you know, he is always inclined to 'temporise'; this is his line now, and he is perhaps right. You know my fear was that without your name in front, the battle at the election would be fought at a great disadvantage. But I see the immense difficulty of a change of front *now*, even if they desired it and you consented to it. This you also feel, I know.

To all this Mr. Gladstone replied to Wolverton as follows :—

Hawarden, December 18, 1879.—I thank you much for your letter. What you report yourself to have said is quite satisfactory to me. If Granville said more than you had mentioned, anything that fell from him would be acceptable to me. When I saw your envelope, I felt a dread lest the contents should be more substantive ; a relief came on reading them. But these communications are useful, as they give distinctness to ideas, and through ideas to intentions. I may state mine as follows :—1. My ears are shut against all the world, except it were Granville and Hartington. 2. And even to them unless they spoke together, and in clear and decisive language. 3. They are the judges whether to speak, as well as when to speak. But as an individual, I am of opinion that there is not a case for their speaking *now*. 4. Were they to speak now, and as I have defined above, I should then say let us have nothing more than a formula, and let the substance of it be that by the nature of things no man in my position could make beforehand an absolute renunciation, and that the leadership in the next parliament must, like everything else, be considered in connection with what may appear at the dissolution to be the sense of the country, but that my action individually has been and will continue to be that of a follower of Lord Granville and Lord Hartington. One thing I would ask of you as a fast friend. If you think that in anything I fall short by omission or commission of perfect loyalty as a member of the party, I beg you to tell me.

[1] Lord Selborne (*Memorials*, i. 471) says that Lord Granville reported to him (Dec. 21), that Lord Hartington at this meeting wished to insist upon Mr. Gladstone resuming the lead, but that the rest were, for the present at all events, against any such step. Lord Granville's own view was that the question, like many other questions, would have to be solved *ambulando*.

II

As usual with him, these grave political preoccupations were not engrossing, but only a part of the day's task. He carried on a pretty profuse correspondence, he worked hard on his favourite diversion of arranging books and papers, he gave much thought and time to estate matters with his eldest son, with him too he felled now a chestnut, now a sycamore; he corrected the proofs of his speeches and wrote an article for Mr. Knowles; he read books and articles about Eleusis, and the Hebrew migration from Egypt, and the Olympian system, and Newman on the Eirenicon, and Westcott on St. John, and somebody else upon St. Thomas Aquinas. For two or three days he was partially disabled by 'a low face-ache: the reaction after heavy pressure, under which I received from the mercy of God such remarkable support.' In the middle of January alarming accounts came from his sister Helen, who lay dying at Cologne. Thither he sped with his eldest brother and his sister-in-law. They found life fast ebbing, and four days after their arrival the end came, in the midst of pious exercises and affectionate care. They were satisfied that she had been 'freely restored to the unity of spirit and the bond of peace,' and had died not in the actual Roman communion. A few days after his return home he records: 'Wrote a long memorandum of the evidence in regard to dear Helen's religious profession.' The remains they bore to Fasque, and by the end of the month he was again at Hawarden, once more at work with his eldest son upon the 'accumulated disorder,' and the rest of the round of his familiar employments. Among other things he read Cowper's *Task*—'the fifth book very noble in its moral strain'; and another entry will interest many,—'*Feb.* 15.—Read the biography of noble Dora Pattison. How by reflex action it stings. . . . Yet even to her (like Bishop Butler), death was terrible.' 'He was haunted,' he writes, 'with recollections of Sister Dora.' Then after a Sunday passed in church exercises, and 'skimming many theological books,' on February 23 he 'left Hawarden with a heavy heart.'

He quickly found himself in the London whirlpool, attending conclaves of his political friends, dining out, seeing Irving in the *Merchant of Venice* ('his best, I think'), speaking once or twice in the House, and twice at London meetings in St. Pancras and Marylebone, where the popular enthusiasm made even his most hardened critics begin to suspect that the tide had really turned since the days when the Londoners mobbed him in the street and broke his windows.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FALL OF LORD BEACONSFIELD

(*1880*)

In causa facili cuivis licet esse disertum,
Et minimae vires frangere quassa valent;
Subruere est arces et stantia moenia virtus.
Ov. Trist. iii. 11. 23.

In an easy case any man can plead, and against shattered walls the puniest strength prevails; 'tis the overthrow of standing towers and frowning ramparts that tests manhood.

At last one day (March 8) when Mr. Gladstone was 'writing a little on Homer,' he heard the fated news that the dissolution was announced. Lord Beaconsfield published the famous letter to the lord lieutenant of Ireland, and in deep accents and sonorous sentences endeavoured to make home rule the issue of the election. Shrewd politicians, with time to reflect, found it not easy to divine why the government had chosen the particular moment. It might be, as some supposed, that they thought the opposition had lately got into bad odour with the country by coquetting with home rulers, as shown by the elections at Liverpool and Southwark. But, in fact, little importance was to be attached to these two defeats of the opposition, for Liverpool had always been conservative, and Southwark was thoroughly disorganized by liberal divisions. 'The general opinion seems to be,' says Speaker Brand (Mar. 15), 'that the opposition may gain slightly at the general election, but not to an extent to break down altogether the conservative majority.'

In what was in effect his election address, Lord Beaconsfield warned the country that a danger, in its ultimate results scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine, distracted Ireland. A portion of its population was endeavouring to sever the constitutional tie that united it to Great Britain in that bond which was favourable to the power and prosperity of both. 'It is to be hoped,' he went on, 'that all men of light and leading will resist this destructive doctrine. The strength of

this action depends on the unity of feeling which should pervade the United Kingdom and its widespread dependencies. The first duty of an English minister should be to consolidate that co-operation which renders irresistible the community educated as our own, in an equal love of liberty and law. And yet there are some who challenge the expediency of the imperial character of this realm. Having attempted and failed to enfeeble our colonies by their policy of decomposition, they may perhaps now recognise in the disintegration of the United Kingdom, a mode which will not only accomplish, but precipitate their purpose. . . . Rarely in this century has there been an occasion more critical. The power of England and the peace of Europe will largely depend upon the verdict of the country. . . . Peace rests on the presence, not to say the ascendency of England in the councils of Europe. Even at this moment the doubt supposed to be inseparable from popular elections, if it does not diminish, certainly arrests her influence, and is a main reason for not delaying an appeal to the national voice.'

To this manifesto Mr. Gladstone, with his usual long pains in the drafting of such pieces, prepared his counterblast. He went with direct force to what Lord Beaconsfield had striven to make the centre of his appeal :—

In the electioneering address which the prime minister has issued, an attempt is made to work upon your fears by dark allusions to the repeal of the union and the abandonment of the colonies. Gentlemen, those who endangered the union with Ireland were the party that maintained there an alien church, an unjust land law, and franchises inferior to our own ; and the true supporters of the union are those who firmly uphold the supreme authority of parliament, but exercise that authority to bind the three nations by the indissoluble tie of liberal and equal laws. As to the colonies, liberal administrations set free their trade with all the world, gave them popular and responsible government, undertook to defend Canada with the whole strength of the empire, and organized the great scheme for uniting the several settlements of British North America into one dominion, to which, when we quitted office in 1866, it only remained for our successors to ask the ready assent of parliament. It is by these measures that the colonies have been bound in affection to the empire, and the authors of them can afford to smile at baseless insinuations. Gentlemen, the true purpose of these terrifying insinuations is to hide from view the acts of the ministry, and their effect upon the character and condition of the country.

To those ministerial misdeeds he proceeded to draw the attention of the electors, though he declared with threescore years and ten upon his head, how irksome he felt the task. 'At home,' he said, 'the ministers have neglected legislation, aggravated the public distress by continual shocks to confidence which is the life of enterprise, augmented the public expenditure and taxation for purposes not merely unnecessary but mischievous, and plunged the finances, which were handed

over to them in a state of singular prosperity, into a series of deficits unexampled in modern times.' After shooting this heavy bolt he looked abroad. 'Abroad they have strained, if they have not endangered, the prerogative by gross misuse, and have weakened the empire by needless wars, unprofitable extensions, and unwise engagements, and have dishonoured it in the eyes of Europe by filching the island of Cyprus from the Porte under a treaty clause distinctly concluded in violation of the treaty of Paris, which formed part of the international law of Christendom.' As to the domestic legislation of the future, it was in the election address of the prime minister a perfect blank. It was true that in default of reform in this kingdom, the nation was promised the advantages of 'presence, not to say ascendency' in the councils of Europe.

'There is indeed,' he said, 'an ascendency in European councils to which Great Britain might reasonably aspire, by steadily sustaining the character of a Power no less just than strong; attached to liberty and law, jealous of peace, and therefore opposed to intrigue and aggrandizement, from whatever quarter they may come; jealous of honour, and therefore averse to the clandestine engagements which have marked our two latest years. To attain a moral and envied ascendency such as this, is indeed a noble object for any minister or any empire.'

II

Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Acton on March 14:—

On Tuesday I am to set out for Midlothian and my *last* general election. My general elections have been 1832, 1835, 1837, 1841, 1847, 1852, 1857, 1859, 1865, 1868, 1874, and now 1880—what a list! I believe that among the official men of this century I am now beaten only by Lord Palmerston in the length of my career in the House of Commons. A clear answer from the nation, a clear answer in the right sense, and a decisive accession of the liberal party to power without me, this is what I hope and pray. I think that the experts and the party generally are pretty sanguine. None doubt that the government are to lose; a few doubt whether they will be weaker than liberals and home rulers; very many whether weaker than liberals alone. All agree that Scotland will do its duty.

On the morning of the 16th, Mr. Gladstone started. Hundreds of people grew to thousands long before his train left King's Cross, and all the way to Edinburgh he found the same vivid interest and acclamation on the east coast that had greeted him in November on the west. At Grantham the mayor and a crowd estimated by nimble statisticians at two thousand, awaited him at the station; at York the lord mayor and six thousand; at Newcastle-on-Tyne too many thousands to count. The little addresses made at these stopping-places were described as a sort of table of contents of the more elaborate speeches to be delivered in Midlothian itself. As he crossed the Tweed the fervour did not cool, and when at

last he reached Edinburgh, he encountered a scene almost as wonderful as that which had met him four months before.

Again he was the guest at Dalmeny, and again he renewed his prodigious exertions amid a vehemence of admiration and delight that became more intense as the days passed. Here is an entry or two from the diary :—

Travelled forty miles and delivered three speeches of forty-five or fifty minutes each, at Juniper Green, Colinton, and Mid Calder. Enthusiasm unabated. . . . Corrected and despatched proofs of *Religion, Achaian and Semitic*. *Mar.* 21, *Palm Sunday*.—Drove to Edinburgh cathedral ; service 11-1½. Free St. George's in the afternoon. Walked out seven miles with Lord Rosebery. 22.—To Edinburgh (after working as usual on my papers) at 1.15. Short complimentary address at liberal club. Then to George Street and on to the city election committee ; short speech. Then by train to Gilmerton ; spoke forty-five or fifty minutes ; next after tea to Loanhead, and after more tea, spoke again for some time on Russian aggrandizement. Everywhere the greatest enthusiasm. Mr. C[owan] gave me interesting details about Magyar and Bohemian students. Back to Dalmeny at 7.20.

And so day after day did panting time toil after him in vain. Many of us have known long spells of hard electioneering—but not in one's seventy-first year, with every single word as it fell into print on the morrow watched with the lynx eyes of party scrutiny, and all loaded with the heaviest personal responsibility.

On March 24 the parliament was dissolved. On March 30 the first elections took place, and the first pollings on the day following. From the early returns it was pretty evident that the liberals would have a majority. On the first day they made a net gain of fifteen seats in sixty-nine constituencies. By the end of the fourth day a total net gain of fifty seats was recorded. The ministerial majority was already gone. The county elections brought new surprises, and by the end of the second week the liberal gains were reckoned at ninety-nine.

Mr. Gladstone's fortnight of discourse ended on the 2nd of April. 'So,' he records, 'ends the second series of the speeches in which I have hammered with all my poor might at the fabric of the present tory power. *April* 3.—Cut down a Spanish chestnut in Dalmeny Park by order. The day was quiet, but my papers and letters and the incoming news made it busy. It seemed as if the arm of the Lord had bared itself for work that He has made His own. 4.—A lull in election news, but the reflections on what has passed are overpowering.' Here are his closing words, and they are not without historic import :—

The great trial, gentlemen, proceeds. You have great forces arrayed against you. I say 'You' ; if you will permit me to identify myself with you, I will say, We have great forces arrayed against us, and apparently we cannot make our appeal to the aristocracy, excepting that which must never be forgotten, the distinguished and enlightened minority

of that body of able, energetic, patriotic, liberal-minded men, whose feelings are with those of the people, and who decorate and dignify their rank by their strong sympathy with the entire community. With that exception, in all the classes of which I speak, I am sorry to say we cannot reckon upon what is called the landed interest, we cannot reckon upon the clergy of the established church either in England or in Scotland, subject again and always in each case to the most noble exceptions—exceptions, I trust, likely to enlarge and multiply from day to day. On none of these can we place our trust. We cannot reckon on the wealth of the country, nor upon the rank of the country, nor upon the influence which rank and wealth usually bring. In the main these powers are against us, for wherever there is a close corporation, wherever there is a spirit of organized monopoly, wherever there is a narrow and sectional interest apart from that of the country, and desiring to be set up above the interest of the public, there, gentlemen, we the liberal party, have no friendship and no tolerance to expect. Above all these, and behind all these, there is something greater than these—there is the nation itself. This great trial is now proceeding before the nation. The nation is a power hard to rouse, but when roused, harder still and more hopeless to resist. . . . I figure to myself those who have constituted the majority of the late House of Commons as the persons arraigned, and the constituencies of the country as those who are called together in the solemn order of the constitution to hear the evidence, and to pronounce the verdict. That evidence has been pretty largely given. That verdict we await. We have none of the forms of a judicial trial. There are no peers in Westminster Hall, there are no judges on the woolsack: but if we concentrate our minds upon the truth of the case as apart from its mere exterior, it is a grander and a more august spectacle than was ever exhibited either in Westminster Hall or in the House of Lords. For a nation, called to undertake a great and responsible duty,—a duty which is to tell, as we are informed from high authority, on the peace of Europe and on the destinies of England,—has found its interests mismanaged, its honour tarnished, and its strength burdened and weakened by needless, mischievous, unauthorised, and unprofitable engagements, and it has resolved that this state of things shall cease, and that right and justice shall be done.[1]

Mr. Gladstone was already member for Leeds. So far back as the March of 1878 Sir James Kitson had written to ask him to become a candidate for the great city of the West Riding, but Mr. Gladstone declined the proposal. Then a deputation came to him in Harley Street, and he made them a speech on the Eastern question, but avoided any reference to the subject which they had come to handle. The stout Yorkshiremen were not to be baffled, and Mr. Gladstone, nominated without action of his own, was now returned by the unprecedented vote of 24,622.[2] He was right in calling the Leeds election 'one of the most conspicuous and imposing victories ever won for the liberal cause.'[3] Still public interest was concentrated upon

[1] Speech at West Calder, April 1, 1880.

[2] The other candidates stood: Barran (L.), 23,674; Jackson (C.), 13,331; Wheelhouse (C.), 11,965. As the constituency was three-cornered, Gladstone, Barran, and Jackson were elected.

[3] Letter to electors of Leeds, April 7, 1880.

Midlothian, and the might with which he prevailed over men's minds there, was admitted by his foes to be the most impressive tribute ever paid to political man and his vast powers as orator and popular leader. In Midlothian the crusade had been opened, and in Midlothian its triumph was sealed.

The poll was declared in Edinburgh soon after seven on the evening of April 5, and a few minutes later the result, amid every demonstration of extravagant delight from the triumphant multitude as they rushed away from the court-house, was made known to Mr. Gladstone at a house in George Street taken by Lord Rosebery for the occasion. A couple of candles were brought from the dining-table and held on each side of him, so that his face might be seen, as from the balcony he spoke a few words of thanks.[1] 'Drove into Edinburgh about four,' Mr. Gladstone records. 'At 7.20 Mr. Reid brought the figures of the poll—Gladstone, 1579; Dalkeith, 1368; quite satisfactory. Soon after, 15,000 people being gathered in George Street, I spoke very shortly from the windows, and Rosebery followed, excellently well. Home about 10. Wonderful and nothing less has been the disposing guiding hand of God in all this matter.' The majority was not of great dimensions, but it was adequate and sufficient, and the victory was celebrated half through the night with bonfires, illuminations, fireworks, and all the other fashions of signifying public joy, throughout Scotland and the north of England. The astrologers, meteorologists, and prognosticators of Pall Mall and Fleet Street felt that for once at least they had not rightly plumbed the depths of the democratic seas.

Lord Beaconsfield was staying alone at that time in the historic halls of Hatfield, their master being then abroad. There, hour by hour and day after day, news of the long train of disasters reached him. From one in confidential relations with him, and who saw much of him at this moment, I have heard that the fallen minister, who had counted on a very different result, now faced the ruin of his government, the end of his career, and the overwhelming triumph of his antagonist, with an unclouded serenity and a greatness of mind, worthy of a man who had known high fortunes and filled to the full the measure of his gifts and his ambitions.

III

Some writers complained that the language of Midlothian was as solemn as if the verdict of the country were about to settle the issues of the battle of Armageddon. It was not exactly the battle of Armageddon, but the election of 1880 was, at any rate, one of the most remarkable in party history. For one thing, activity was unprecedented, and Mr. Gladstone's

[1] The iron railing of this balcony is now a sacred relic in the hands of a faithful follower.

fiery spirit seemed to have spread over the country. A list prepared by the liberal whips, and preserved by Mr. Gladstone, describes the new parliament as composed of 347 liberals, 240 conservatives, and 65 nationalists. Looking at the divisions of the three kingdoms, we find England and Wales contributing 282 liberals against 207 tories; Scotland, 52 liberals against 8 tories; and Ireland, 13 liberals against 25 tories. The Irish nationalists were of two shades: 35 followers of Mr. Parnell, 26 moderate home rulers who followed Mr. Shaw, and 4 dubious. In England and Wales therefore the liberal majority was 75, and in Scotland it was 44. Turning to electoral aspects with special social significance, we note that of the county constituencies 63 sent liberal members as against 124 tories. In the metropolis, as a whole, the government gained one seat and lost four, with the result that London was represented in the new parliament by 8 tories and 14 liberals. One victory of real importance was won by the government, for they beat the liberal by two to one in the City of London, the heart and centre of many of those powerful influences that Mr. Gladstone had described in his last speech in the Midlothian election as determined foes from whom the liberal party had no tolerance to expect. 'The tory party,' Mr. Gladstone noted, 'has never had a majority on any one of its own four dissolutions—1852, 1859, 1868, 1880.'

Mr. Gladstone to Lord Rosebery.

Hawarden, April 10, 1880.—. . . I should like to write about these marvellous events, but how can I? The romance of politics which befel my old age in Scotland, has spread over the whole land. You remember perhaps my series of fractions, comparing daily the net gains with the gross returns. The first day began with 1/13 or thereabouts. It had got to 1/10 or 1/9 when we left you. It is now 1/6. How idle to talk about the caprice of household suffrage; the counties have given quite as remarkable results as the boroughs. I was stunned at the end of the first night; and I am still out of breath from the endeavour to keep up with the rapidity of events. I suppose the conservative Scotch will fill the first class compartment, or nearly so, but no more. Wales, I beg you to observe, has not (as I think) been behind Scotland in her achievements. Most of the wretched percentage of compensation on 'tory gains' on the general list is wretched in quality as well as quantity, and consists of the *district* places. To scarcely one of these gains can they point with any keen satisfaction. As to Midlothian the moral effect, before and after, has I think surpassed all our hopes. The feeling until it was over (since which there has justly been a centring of thought on E. Lancashire) was so fastened on it, that it was almost like one of the occasions of old when the issue of battle was referred to single combat. The great merit of it I apprehend lay in the original conception, which I take to have been yours, and to overshadow even your operations towards the direct production of the result. But one thing it cannot overshadow in my mind; the sense of the inexpressible aid and comfort derived day by day from your considerate ever-watchful

care and tact. [*Latin not to be identified.*] Let me apply these same words (calling on you for a translation if needful) to Lady Rosebery. I should feel profoundly ashamed of the burdens we brought you, had I not seen how truly they were borne in the spirit, which alone makes all burdens light. It is a very pleasant subject of reflection to me that the riveting effect of companionship in a struggle like this, does not pass away with the struggle itself but abides.

Our stratagem for a quiet exit was on the whole successful. At Carlisle there was perfect quiet. At most of the few places where the train stopped there were a score or two of people and no more. At Hawarden, arriving between 9 and 10 A.M., we cheated the triumphal preparations; but made amends by carrying them over to Herbert the following day. We now become eager for the East Worcestershire election and are sanguine about my son's return. At Warrington we got over the three hours wonderfully, and succeeded in sleeping, though not exactly *μαλθακῶς κατακείμενος* through a succession of the most violent and unearthly noises, banging, crashing, roaring, squealing, that a railway station traversed by innumerable goods trains can supply. . . I will not trouble you with more words of thanks, I feel them so poor and idle.

Two days later Mr. Gladstone wrote to the Duke of Argyll:—

April 12, 1880.—All our heads are still in a whirl from the great events of the last fortnight, which have given joy, I am convinced, to the large majority of the civilized world. The downfall of Beaconsfieldism is like the vanishing of some vast magnificent castle in an Italian romance. It is too big, however, to be all taken in at once. Meantime, while I inwardly rejoice, I am against all outward signs, beyond such as are purely local, of exultation, for they are not chivalrous, and they would tend to barbarise political warfare. We may be well content to thank God in silence. But the outlook is tremendous! The gradual unravelling of the tangled knots of the foreign and Indian policy will indeed be a task for skilled and strong hands, if they can be found; and these can hardly be found such as the case requires.

CHAPTER IX

THE SECOND MINISTRY

(*1880*)

There is indeed one great and critical act, the responsibility for which falls momentarily or provisionally on the Sovereign; it is the dismissal of an existing Ministry, and the appointment of a new one. This act is usually performed with the aid drawn from authentic manifestations of public opinion, mostly such as are obtained through the votes or conduct of the House of Commons.—GLADSTONE.

THE day after the declaration of the poll in Midlothian, Mr. Gladstone and his wife and daughter quitted Dalmeny and made their way homewards, as we have just seen.

April 6.—A heavy day with post, incessant telegrams, and preparations for departure. We drove, however, to Linlithgow, saw the beautiful church and fine old castle, and I made a short non-polemical speech to the people. . . . Careful concealment of the plans of departure until well on in the evening. Left this most hospitable of all houses at 8.30, and got into the 9.25, escaping by secrecy all demonstration except from some 200 who seemed to gather on the instant. Travelled all night, and had time to ruminate on the great hand of God, so evidently displayed.

April 7, *Wed.*—After three hours of successful sleep amid frightful unearthly noises at Warrington, we went off to Chester and Hawarden, saluted enthusiastically, but escaping all crowds. . . . Set to work at once on a mass of letters and papers. . . . The day occupied with papers, letters, and telegrams, and reading my Vatican tracts. . . . The triumph grows and grows; to God be the praise.

April 9.—Letters passed 100. *April* 10, *Sat.*—Church, 8½ A.M. Wrote to. . . . Postal arrivals, 140; terrible! Wolverton arrived to dinner, and I spent the evening in full conversation with him. He threatens a request from Granville and Hartington. Again, I am stunned, but God will provide.

April 11, *Sun.*—Church, 8½ A.M., Holy Communion; 11 A.M. Wrote etc. Read *Gospel for the 19th Century*. Examined liturgical books. Further conversation with Wolverton on the London reception, on Leeds, and on the great matter of all. *April* 12.—Wolverton went off in the morning, and is to see Granville and Hartington to-day. Read Brugsch's *Hist. Egypt*. *Guy Mannering*. Wrote some memoranda of names applicable to this occasion. Hard day. But all are pretty hard in this my 'retirement.' *April* 13.—Began tentatively an anonymous letter on the

Conservative Collapse,[1] really drawn forth by the letter of Lord Bath. . . . Read *Guy Mannering* and that most heavenly man, George Herbert. . . . *April* 16.—Mr. Bright came over from Llandudno, and we spent nearly all the time in conversing on the situation. He is most kind and satisfactory. *April* 17.—Finished my letter and revision of it. Cut down a sycamore with W. H. G. *April* 18, *Sun.*—Holy Communion, 8 A.M.; morning service and evening. Wrote to [17 letters]. Read *Divine Veracity or Divine Justice*, Caird on the *Philosophy of Religion*. *April* 19.—A reluctant good-bye before 1. London at 6.30. A secret journey, but people gathered at Chester station and Euston. I vaguely feel that this journey is a plunge out of an atmosphere of peace into an element of disturbance. May He who has of late so wonderfully guided, guide me still in the critical days about to come. *April* 20.—This blank day is, I think, probably due to the Queen's hesitation or reluctance, which the ministers have to find means of [covering].

One joyous element in these days at Hawarden was the arrival first of the youngest son of the house, then of the eldest, the latter of them having won a seat in Worcestershire, and the former having failed in Middlesex, after a display of qualities that delighted his family and friends much more than mere victory could have done. 'About one,' Mr. Gladstone marks on the 8th, 'Herbert entered in triumph. We were there, and could not but be much moved.' And on the 14th, 'Willy made his triumphal entry at four, and delivered a very good speech. Neville Lyttelton, too, spoke well from the carriage.' As Lord Acton wrote to Miss Gladstone about Middlesex, 'The picture of the young, untried son bursting into sudden popularity, and turning men's thoughts from the absorbing exploits of his father, adds an affecting domestic feature to that great biography. That meeting at Hawarden, after such a revolution and such a growth, is a thing I cannot think of without emotion.' A little later, when Mr. Gladstone's option of Midlothian left the Leeds seat vacant, his son was elected without opposition to fill it. Mr. Gladstone's letters on this operation, which had its delicacies, are an excellent example of his habits of careful and attentive judgment in handling even secondary affairs.

II

From the moment when it became clear that Lord Beaconsfield would be swept out of office, it was just as clear to sensible men that only one successor was possible. It was Mr. Gladstone, as everybody knew and said, who had led and inspired the assault. A cabinet without him would hold its councils without the most important of the influences on which it depended. If the majorities that carried the election could have been consulted on the choice of a minister, nobody doubted upon whom with unanimity their choice would fall. Even those who most detested the result, even those who held that a load

[1] Published anonymously in the *Fortnightly Review*, May 1880.

of anxiety would be lifted from the bosoms of many liberals of official rank if they were to hear of Mr. Gladstone's definite retirement from public life, still pronounced that it was Mr. Gladstone's majority, and that what the contributors to that majority intended to vote for was, above all else, his return to office and his supremacy in national affairs. If he would not lay down his power, such persons said, it was best for everybody that he should exercise it openly, regularly, and responsibly as head of the government.[1] The very fact that he had ceased to be the leader of the opposition five years before, was turned into an argument for his responsibility now; for it was his individual freedom that had enabled him to put forth all his strength, without any of that management and reserve that would have been needed in one who was titular leader of a party, as well as real leader of the nation. The victory would have been shorn of half its glory if any other chief had been given to the party. In short, no minister, not Pitt in 1784, nor Grey in 1831, nor Peel ten years later, nor Palmerston in 1855, was ever summoned by more direct and personal acclaim. Whatever liberty of choice the theory of our constitution assigned to the Queen, in practice this choice did not now exist. It was true that in the first of his Midlothian speeches Mr. Gladstone had used these words, 'I hope the verdict of the country will give to Lord Granville and Lord Hartington the responsible charge of its affairs.'[2] But events had wrought a surprise, and transformed the situation.

Some, indeed, there were whom a vision of another kind possessed; a vision of the moral grandeur that would attend his retirement after putting Apollyon and his legions to flight, and planting his own hosts in triumph in the full measure of their predominance. Some who loved him, might still regretfully cherish for him this heroic dream. Retirement might indeed have silenced evil tongues; it would have spared him the toils of many turbid and tempestuous years. But public life is no idyll. Mr. Gladstone had put himself, by exertions designed for public objects, into a position from which retreat to private ease would have been neither unselfish nor honourable. Is it not an obvious test of true greatness in a statesman, that he shall hold popularity, credit, ascendency and power such as Mr. Gladstone now commanded, as a treasure to be employed with regal profusion for the common good, not guarded in a miser's strong-box? For this outlay of popularity the coming years were to provide Mr. Gladstone with occasions only too ample.

If retreat was impossible, then all the rest was inevitable. And it is easy to guess the course of his ruminations between

[1] See, for instance, *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 2 and 22, then conducted by Mr. Greenwood, the most vigorous and relentless of Mr. Gladstone's critics.

[2] November 25, 1879.

his return from Midlothian and his arrival in Harley Street. Mr. Gladstone himself, looking back seventeen years after, upon his refusal in 1880 to serve in a place below the first, wrote :— 'I conceive that I was plainly right in declining it, for had I acted otherwise, I should have placed the facts of the case in conflict with its rights, and with the just expectations of the country. Besides, as the head of a five years' ministry, and as still in full activity, I should have been strangely placed as the subordinate of one twenty years my junior, and comparatively little tested in public life.'

As the diary records, on Monday, April 12, Lord Wolverton left Hawarden, and was to see the two liberal leaders the same day. He did so, and reported briefly to his chief at night :—

I hope the Plimsoll matter[1] is at an end. The clubs to-night think that Lord Beaconsfield will meet parliament, and that when the time comes, if asked, he will advise that Hartington should be sent for. I do not believe either. I have seen Lord Granville and Hartington ; both came here upon my arrival, and Adam with them. Lord Granville hopes you may be in London on Friday. I told him I thought you would be. He has gone to Walmer, and will come up on Friday. He has a good deal to think of in the meantime as to 'the position of the party.' I need not say more than this, as it embraces the whole question, which he *now quite appreciates*. . . . Nothing could be more cordial and kind than Granville and Hartington, but I hardly think till to-day they *quite* realised the *position*, which I confess seems to me as clear as the sun at noon. They will neither of them speak to any one till Friday, when Lord Granville hopes to see you. Adam is much pleased with your kind note to him. He has gone home till Friday. It is well to be away just now, for the gossip and questioning is unbearable.

Acknowledging this on the following day (April 13), Mr. Gladstone says to Lord Wolverton :—

The claim, so to speak, of Granville and Hartington, or rather, I should say, of Granville with Hartington as against me, or rather as compared with me, is complete. My labours as an individual cannot set me up as a Pretender. Moreover, if they should on surveying their position see fit to apply to me, there is only one form and ground of application, so far as I see, which could be seriously entertained by me, namely, their conviction that on the ground of public policy, all things considered, it was best in the actual position of affairs that I should come out. It cannot be made a matter of ceremonial, as by gentlemen waiving a precedence, or a matter of feeling, as by men of high and delicate honour determined to throw their bias against themselves. They have no right to throw their bias against themselves—they have no right to look at anything but public policy ; and this I am sure will be their conviction. Nothing else can

[1] The Plimsoll matter was a movement to give Mr. Gladstone a public reception on his arrival in London. Mr. Gladstone declined the reception as inconsistent with his intention, expressed at Edinburgh, to avoid all demonstration, and also because it would be regarded as an attempt made for the first time to establish a practice of public rejoicing in the metropolis over the catastrophe of an administration and a political party, and would wound feelings which ought to be respected as well as spared.

possibly absolve them from their presumptive obligation as standing at the head of the party which for the time represents the country.

As a matter of fact, I find no evidence that the two leaders ever did express a conviction that public policy required that he should stand forth as a pretender for the post of prime minister. On the contrary, when Lord Wolverton says that they 'did not quite realise the position' on the 12th, this can only mean that they hardly felt that conviction about the requirements of public policy, which Mr. Gladstone demanded as the foundation of his own decision.

III

The last meeting of the outgoing cabinet was held on April 21. What next took place has been described by Mr. Gladstone himself in memoranda written during the days on which the events occurred.

Interview with Lord Hartington.

April 22, 1880.—At 7 P.M. Hartington came to see me at Wolverton's house and reported on his journey to Windsor.

The Queen stood with her back to the window—which *used* not to be her custom. On the whole I gathered that her manner was more or less embarrassed, but towards him not otherwise than gracious and confiding. She told him that she desired him to form an administration, and pressed upon him strongly his duty to assist her as a responsible leader of the party now in a large majority. I could not find that she expressed clearly her reason for appealing to him as *a* responsible leader of the party, and yet going past *the* leader of the party, namely Granville, whom no one except himself has a title to displace. She however indicated to him her confidence in his moderation, the phrase under which he is daily commended in the *Daily Telegraph*, at this moment I think, Beaconsfield's personal organ and the recipient of his inspirations. By this moderation, the Queen intimated that Hartington was distinguished from Granville as well as from me.

Hartington, in reply to her Majesty, made becoming acknowledgments, and proceeded to say that he did not think a government could be satisfactorily formed without me; he had not had any direct communication with me; but he had reason to believe that I would not take any office or post in the government except that of first minister. Under those circumstances he advised her Majesty to place the matter in my hands. The Queen continued to urge upon him the obligations arising out of his position, and desired him to ascertain whether he was right in his belief that I would not act in a ministry unless as first minister. This, he said, is a question which I should not have put to you, except when desired by the Queen.

I said her Majesty was quite justified, I thought, in requiring positive information, and he, therefore, in putting the question to me. Of my action he was already in substantial possession, as it had been read to him (he had told me) by Wolverton. I am not asked, I said, for reasons, but only for Aye or No, and consequently I have only to say

that I adhere to my reply as you have already conveyed it to the Queen.

In making such a reply, it was my duty to add that in case a government should be formed by him, or by Granville with him, whom the Queen seemed to me wrongly to have passed by—it was to Granville that I had resigned my trust, and he, Hartington, was subsequently elected by the party to the leadership in the House of Commons—my duty would be plain. It would be to give them all the support in my power, both negatively, as by absence or non-interference, and positively. Promises of this kind, I said, stood on slippery ground, and must always be understood with the limits which might be prescribed by conviction. I referred to the extreme caution, almost costiveness, of Peel's replies to Lord Russell, when he was endeavouring to form a government in December 1845 for the purpose of carrying the repeal of the Corn Law. In this case, however, I felt a tolerable degree of confidence, because I was not aware of any substantive divergence of ideas between us, and I had observed with great satisfaction, when his address to North-East Lancashire came into my hands, after the writing but before the publication of mine to Midlothian, that they were in marked accordance as to opinions, if not as to form and tone, and I did not alter a word. In the case of the first Palmerston government I had certainly been thrown into rather sharp opposition after I quitted it, but this was mainly due to finance. I had not approved of the finance of Sir George Lewis, highly as I estimated his judgment in general politics; and it was in some ways a relief to me, when we had become colleagues in the second Palmerston government, to find that he did not approve of mine. However, I could only make such a declaration as the nature of the case allowed.

He received all this without comment, and said his conversation with her Majesty had ended as it began, each party adhering to the ground originally taken up. He had not altered his advice, but had come under her Majesty's command to learn my intentions, which he was to make known to her Majesty returning to Windsor *this* day at one.

He asked me what I thought of the doctrine of obligation so much pressed upon him by the Queen. I said that in my opinion the case was clear enough. Her Majesty had not always acted on the rule of sending for the leader of the opposition. Palmerston was the known and recognised leader of the opposition in 1859, but the Queen sent for Granville. The leader, if sent for, was in my opinion bound either to serve himself, or to point out some other course to her Majesty which he might deem to be more for the public advantage. And if that course should fail in consequence of the refusal of the person pointed out, the leader of the party could not leave her Majesty unprovided with a government, but would be bound in loyalty to undertake the task.

I did not indicate, nor did he ask, what I should do if sent for. He did not indicate, nor did I ask, what he should do if the Queen continued to press him to go on, in spite of his advice to her to move in another direction.—*April* 23, 1880.

A barren controversy was afterwards raised on the question whether at this exciting moment Lord Hartington tried to form a government. What he did, according to the memorandum, was to advise the Queen to send for Mr. Gladstone, on the

ground of his belief that Mr. Gladstone would join no government of which he was not the head. The Queen then urged him to make sure of this, before she would acquiesce in his refusal to undertake the commission. The Queen, as Mr. Gladstone says, had a right to require positive information, and Lord Hartington had a right, and it was even his duty, to procure this information for her, and to put the direct question to Mr. Gladstone, whether he would or would not act in an administration of which he was not the head. He went back to Windsor, not in the position of a statesman who has tried to form a government and failed, but in the position of one who had refused a task because he knew all along that failure was certain, and now brought proof positive that his refusal was right.[1]

What happened next was easy to foresee :—

Interview with Lord Granville and Lord Hartington.

April 23, 1880.—Soon after half-past three to-day, Lord Granville and Lord Hartington arrived from Windsor at my house, and signified to me the Queen's command that I should repair to Windsor where she would see me at half-past six.

The purport of Lord Hartington's conversation with me yesterday had been signified. They had jointly advised thereupon that I should be sent for with a view to the formation of a government, and her Majesty desired Lord Granville would convey to me the message. I did not understand that there had been any lengthened audience, or any reference to details.

Receiving this intimation, I read to them an extract from an article in the *Daily News* of yesterday,[2] descriptive of their position relatively to me, and of mine to them, and said that, letting drop the epithets, so I understood the matter. I presumed, therefore, that under the circumstances as they were established before their audience, they had unitedly advised the sovereign that it was most for the public advantage to send for me. To this they assented. I expressed, a little later, my sense of the high honour and patriotism with which they had acted ; said that I had endeavoured to fulfil my own duty, but was aware I might be subject to severe criticism for my resignation of the leadership five years ago, which I had forced upon them ; but I did it believing in good faith that we were to have quiet times, and for the first years, 1875 and 1876, and to the end of the session I had acted in a manner conformable to that resignation, and had only been driven from my corner by compulsion. They made no reply, but Granville had previously told me he was perfectly satisfied as to my communications with him.

I at once asked whether I might reckon, as I hoped, on their co-operation in the government. Both assented. Granville agreed to take the foreign office, but modestly and not as of right. I proposed the India

[1] See an interesting letter from Viscount Esher, *Times*, Feb. 22, 1892.

[2] 'Without their full acquiescence—and indeed their earnest pressure—he could not even now take a step which would seem to slight claims which he has amply and generously acknowledged. . . . If either now or a few days later he accepts the task of forming and the duty of presiding over a liberal administration, it will be because Lord Granville and Lord Hartington, with characteristic patriotism, have themselves been among the first to feel and the most eager to urge Mr. Gladstone's return to the post to which he has been summoned.'—*Daily News*, April 22.

office as next, and as very near in weight, and perhaps the most difficult of all at this time, to Hartington, which he desired time to consider. I named Childers as the most proper person for the war office. As I had to prepare for Windsor, our interview was not very long; and they agreed to come again after dinner.

We spoke of the governor-generalship, at least I spoke to Granville who stayed a little after Hartington, and I said Goschen's position as to the franchise would prevent his being in the cabinet now, but he should be in great employ. Granville had had the lead in the conversation; and said the Queen requested *him* to carry the message to me.

Audience at Windsor.

Windsor Castle, April 23, 1880.—At 6.50 I went to the Queen, who received me with perfect courtesy, from which she never deviates. Her Majesty presumed I was in possession of the purport of her communications with Lord Granville and with Lord Hartington, and wished to know, as the administration of Lord Beaconsfield had been 'turned out,' whether I was prepared to form a government. She thought she had acted constitutionally in sending for the recognised leaders of the party, and referring the matter to them in the first instance. I said that if I might presume to speak, nothing could in my views be more correct than her Majesty's view that the application should be so made (I did not refer to the case as *between* Lord Granville and Lord Hartington), and that it would have been an error to pass them by and refer to me. They had stood, I said, between me and the position of a candidate for office, and it was only their advising her Majesty to lay her commands upon me, which could warrant my thinking of it after all that had occurred. But since they had given this advice, it was not consistent with my duty to shrink from any responsibility which I had incurred, and I was aware that I had incurred a very great responsibility. I therefore humbly accepted her Majesty's commission.

Her Majesty wished to know, in order that she might acquaint Lord Beaconsfield, whether I could undertake to form a government, or whether I only meant that I would make the attempt. I said I had obtained the co operation of Lord Granville and Lord Hartington, and that my knowledge and belief as to prevailing dispositions would, I think, warrant me in undertaking to form a government, it being her Majesty's pleasure. I had ascertained that Lord Granville would be willing to accept the foreign office; and I had also to say that the same considerations which made it my duty to accept office, seemed also to make it my duty to submit myself to her Majesty's pleasure for the office of chancellor of the exchequer together with that of first lord of the treasury.

She asked if I had thought of any one for the war office, which was very important. The report of the Commission would show that Lord Cardwell's system of short service had entirely broken down, and that a change must be made at any rate as regarded the non-commissioned officers. Lord Hartington had assured her that no one was committed to the system except Lord Cardwell, and he was very unwell and hardly able to act. Lord Hartington knew the war office, and she thought would make a good war minister. I said that it seemed to me in the present state of the country the first object was to provide for the difficulties of statesmanship, and then to deal with those of administration. The greatest of all these difficulties, I thought, centred in the India office,

and I was very much inclined to think Lord Hartington would be eminently qualified to deal with them, and would thereby take a place in the government suitable to his position and his probable future.

She asked, to whom, then, did I think of entrusting the war office? [Resumed this afternoon, April 24.][1] I said Mr. Childers occurred to me as an administrator of eminent capacity and conciliatory in his modes of action; his mind would be open on the grave subjects treated by the Commission, which did not appear to me to be even for Lord Cardwell matters of committal, but simply of public policy to be determined by public advantage. She thought that Mr. Childers had not been popular at the admiralty, and that it was desirable the secretary for war should be liked by the army. I said that there was an occurrence towards the close of his term which placed him in a difficult position, but relied on his care and discretion. (She did not press the point, but is evidently under strong professional bias.)

She spoke of the chancellorship, and I named Lord Selborne.

She referred to general action and hoped it would be conciliatory. I said that every one who had served the crown for even a much smaller term of years than I had the good or ill-fortune to reckon, would know well that an incoming government must recognise existing engagements, and must take up, irrespective of its preferences, whatever was required by the character and honour of the country. I referred to the case of Scinde and Sir R. Peel's cabinet in 1843; which she recognised as if it had been recently before her.

She said, 'I must be frank with you, Mr. Gladstone, and must fairly say that there have been some expressions'—I think she said some little things, which had caused her concern or pain. I said that her Majesty's frankness, so well known, was a main ground of the entire reliance of her ministers upon her. That I was conscious of having incurred a great responsibility, and felt the difficulty which arises when great issues are raised, and a man can only act and speak upon the best lights he possesses, aware all the time that he may be in error. That I had undoubtedly used a mode of speech and language different in some degree from what I should have employed, had I been the leader of a party or a candidate for office. Then as regarded conciliation, in my opinion the occasion for what I had described had wholly passed away, and that so far as I was concerned, it was my hope that her Majesty would not find anything to disapprove in my general tone; that my desire and effort would be to diminish her cares, in any case not to aggravate them; that, however, considering my years, I could only look to a short term of active exertion and a personal retirement comparatively early. With regard to the freedom of language I had admitted, she said with some good-natured archness, 'But you will have to bear the consequences,' to which I entirely assented. She seemed to me, if I may so say, 'natural under effort.' All things considered, I was much pleased. I ended by kissing her Majesty's hand.

IV.

The usual embarrassments in building a government filled many days with unintermittent labour of a kind that

[1] Up to this point the memorandum is on Windsor notepaper, and must have been written between the end of the audience and the time for the train—a very characteristic instance of his alacrity.

like Peel Mr. Gladstone found intensely harassing, though interesting. The duty of leaving out old colleagues can hardly have been other than painful, but Mr. Gladstone was a man of business, and he reckoned on a proper stoicism in the victims of public necessity. To one of them he wrote, 'While I am the oldest man of my political generation, I have been brought by the seeming force of exceptional circumstances to undertake a task requiring less of years and more of vigour than my accumulating store of the one and waning residue of the other, and I shall be a solecism in the government which I have undertaken to form. I do not feel able to ask you to resume the toils of office,' etc., but would like to name him the recipient for a signal mark of honour. 'I have not the least right to be disappointed when you select younger men for your colleagues,' the cheerful man replied. Not all were so easily satisfied. 'It is cruel to make a disqualification for others out of an infirmity of my own,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to the oldest of his comrades in the Peelite days, but—et cetera, et cetera, and he would be glad to offer his old ally the red riband of the Bath when one should be vacant. The peer to whom this letter with its dubious solatium was addressed, showed his chagrin by a reply of a single sentence: that he did not wish to leave the letter unanswered, lest it should seem to admit that he was in a state of health which he did not feel to be the case; the red riband was not even declined. One admirable man with intrepid *naïveté* proposed himself for the cabinet, but was not admitted; another no less admirable was pressed to enter, but felt that he could be more useful as an independent member, and declined—an honourable transaction repeated by the same person on more than one occasion later. To one excellent member of his former cabinet, the prime minister proposed the chairmanship of committee, and it was with some tartness refused. Another equally excellent member of the old administration he endeavoured to plant out in the viceregal lodge at Dublin, without the cabinet, but in vain. To a third he proposed the Indian vice-royalty, and received an answer that left him 'stunned and out of breath.' As the hours passed and office after office was filled up, curiosity grew vivacious as to the fate appointed for the younger generation of radicals. The great posts had gone to patrician whigs, just as if Mr. Gladstone had been a Grey or a Russell. As we have seen, he had secured Lord Granville and Lord Hartington before he went to Windsor, and on the evening of his return, the first person to whom he applied was Lord Derby, one of the most sagacious men of his day, but a great territorial noble and a very recent convert. He declined office on the ground that if a man changes his party connection, he is bound to give proof that he wishes the change from no merely personal motive, and that he is not a gainer by it.

Mr. Bright had joined, it was true, and Mr. Forster, but Bright the new radicals honoured and revered without any longer following, and with Forster they had quarrelled violently upon education, nor was the quarrel ever healed. One astute adviser, well acquainted with the feeling and expectations of the left wing, now discovered to his horror that Mr. Gladstone was not in the least alive to the importance of the leaders of the radical section, and had never dreamed of them for his cabinet. His view seems to have been something of this kind, 'You have been saved from whig triumph in the person of Lord Hartington; now that you have got me to keep the balance, I must have a whig cabinet.' He was, moreover, still addicted to what he called Peel's rule against admitting anybody straight into the cabinet without having held previous office. At last he sent for Sir Charles Dilke. To his extreme amazement Sir Charles refused to serve, unless either himself or Mr. Chamberlain were in the cabinet; the prime minister might make his choice between them; then the other would accept a subordinate post. Mr. Gladstone discoursed severely on this unprecedented enormity, and the case was adjourned. Mr. Bright was desired to interfere, but the pair remained inexorable. In the end the lot fell on Mr. Chamberlain. 'Your political opinions,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to him (April 27), 'may on some points go rather beyond what I may call the general measure of the government, but I hope and believe that there can be no practical impediment on this score to your acceptance of my proposal.' So Mr. Chamberlain took office at the board of trade, where Mr. Gladstone himself had begun his effective career in administration nearly forty years before; and his confederate went as under-secretary to the foreign office. At that time the general feeling was that Sir Charles Dilke, long in parliament and a man of conspicuous mark within its walls, was rather badly used, and that Mr. Gladstone ought to have included both. All this was the ominous prelude of a voyage that was to be made through many storms.[1]

One incident of these labours of construction may illustrate Mr. Gladstone's curious susceptibility in certain kinds of personal contest. He proposed that Mr. Lowe should be made a viscount, while the Queen thought that a barony would meet the claim. For once it broke the prime minister's sleep; he got up in the middle of the night and dashed off a letter to Windsor. The letter written, the minister went to bed again, and was in an instant sound asleep.

'The new parliament,' he told his old friend at school and college, Sir Francis Doyle (May 10), 'will be tested by its acts. It will not draw its inspiration from me. No doubt it will make changes that will be denounced as revolutionary, and

[1] The reader will find the list of the members of the cabinet, now and at later periods of its existence, in the Appendix.

then recognised as innocent and even good. But I expect it to act in the main on well-tried and established lines, and do much for the people and little to disquiet my growing years, or even yours.' All fell out strangely otherwise, and disquiet marked his second administration from its beginning to its end. To lay all the blame on a prime minister or his cabinet for this, is like blaming the navigator for wild weather. In spite of storm and flood, great things were done; deep, notable, and abiding results ensued. The procedure of parliament underwent a profound revolution. So too did our electoral system in all its aspects. New lines of cleavage showed themselves in the divisions of political party. A not unimportant episode occurred in the chapter of religious toleration. The Irish peasant, after suffering centuries of oppression and tyrannic wrong, at last got the charter of his liberation. In a more distant region, as if to illustrate the power of events against the will of a statesman and the contemporary opinion of a nation, England for good or evil found herself planted in the valley of the Nile, and became a land-power on the Mediterranean.

Book VIII

(1880–1885)

CHAPTER I

OPENING DAYS OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT

(1880)

Il y a bien du factice dans le classement politique des hommes.—Guizot.
There is plenty of what is purely artificial in the political classification of men.

On May 20, after eight-and-forty years of strenuous public life, Mr. Gladstone met his twelfth parliament, and the second in which he had been chief minister of the crown. 'At 4.15,' he records, 'I went down to the House with Herbert. There was a great and fervent crowd in Palace Yard, and much feeling in the House. It almost overpowered me, as I thought by what deep and hidden agencies I have been brought back into the midst of the vortex of political action and contention. It has not been in my power during these last six months to have made notes, as I would have wished, of my own thoughts and observations from time to time; of the new access of strength which in some important respects has been administered to me in my old age; and of the remarkable manner in which Holy Scripture has been applied to me for admonition and for comfort. Looking calmly on this course of experience, I do believe that the Almighty has employed me for His purposes in a manner larger or more special than before, and has strengthened me and led me on accordingly, though I must not forget the admirable saying of Hooker, that even ministers of good things are like torches, a light to others, waste and destruction to themselves.'

One who approached his task in such a spirit as this was at least impregnable to ordinary mortifications, and it was well; for before many days were over it became perceptible that the new parliament and the new majority would be no docile instrument of ministerial will. An acute chill followed

the discovery that there was to be no recall of Frere or Layard. Very early in its history Speaker Brand, surveying his flock from the august altitude of the Chair with an acute, experienced, and friendly eye, made up his mind that the liberal party were 'not only strong, but determined to have their own way in spite of Mr. Gladstone. He has a difficult team to drive.' Two men of striking character on the benches opposite quickly became formidable. Lord Randolph Churchill headed a little group of four tories, and Mr. Parnell a resolute band of five-and-thirty Irishmen, with momentous results both for ministers and for the House of Commons.

No more capable set of ruling men were ever got together than the cabinet of 1880; no men who better represented the leading elements in the country, in all their variety and strength. The great possessors of land were there, and the heirs of long governing tradition were there; the industrious and the sedate of the middle classes found their men seated at the council board, by the side of others whose keen-sighted ambition sought sources of power in the ranks of manual toil; the church saw one of the most ardent of her sons upon the woolsack, and the most illustrious of them in the highest place of all; the people of the chapel beheld with complacency the rising man of the future in one who publicly boasted an unbroken line of nonconformist descent. They were all men well trained in the habits of business, of large affairs, and in experience of English life; they were all in spite of difference of shade genuinely liberal; and they all professed a devoted loyalty to their chief. The incident of the resolutions on the eastern question [1] was effaced from all memories, and men who in those days had assured themselves that there was no return from Elba, became faithful marshals of the conquering hero. Mediocrity in a long-lived cabinet in the earlier part of the century was the object of Disraeli's keenest mockery. Still a slight ballast of mediocrity in a government steadies the ship and makes for unity — a truth, by the way, that Mr. Disraeli himself, in forming governments, sometimes conspicuously put in practice.

In fact Mr. Gladstone found that the ministry of which he stood at the head was a coalition, and what was more, a coalition of that vexatious kind, where those who happened not to agree sometimes seemed to be almost as well pleased with contention as with harmony. The two sections were not always divided by differences of class or station, for some of the peers in the cabinet often showed as bold a liberalism as any of the commoners. This notwithstanding, it happened on more than one critical occasion, that all the peers *plus* Lord Hartington were on one side, and all the commoners on the other. Lord Hartington was in many respects the lineal

[1] Above, pp. 128-131.

successor of Palmerston in his coolness on parliamentary reform, in his inclination to stand in the old ways, in his extreme suspicion of what savoured of sentiment or idealism or high-flown profession. But he was a Palmerston who respected Mr. Gladstone, and desired to work faithfully under him, instead of being a Palmerston who always intended to keep the upper hand of him. Confronting Lord Hartington was Mr. Chamberlain, eager, intrepid, self-reliant, alert, daring, with notions about property, taxation, land, schools, popular rights, that he expressed with a plainness and pungency of speech that had never been heard from a privy councillor and cabinet minister before, that exasperated opponents, startled the whigs, and brought him hosts of adherents among radicals out of doors. It was at a very early stage in the existence of the government, that this important man said to an ally in the cabinet, 'I don't see how we are to get on, if Mr. Gladstone goes.' And here was the key to many leading incidents, both during the life of this administration and for the eventful year in Mr. Gladstone's career that followed its demise.

The Duke of Argyll, who resigned very early, wrote to Mr. Gladstone after the government was overthrown (Dec. 18, 1885), urging him in effect to side definitely with the whigs against the radicals:—

> From the moment our government was fairly under way, I saw and felt that speeches *outside* were allowed to affect opinion, and politically to commit the cabinet in a direction which was not determined by you deliberately, or by the government as a whole, but by the audacity . . . of our new associates. Month by month I became more and more uncomfortable, feeling that there was no paramount direction—nothing but *slip* and *slide*, what the Scotch call 'slithering.' The outside world, knowing your great gifts and powers, assume that you are dictator in your own cabinet. And in one sense you are so, that is to say, that when you choose to put your foot down, others will give way. But your amiability to colleagues, your even extreme gentleness towards them, whilst it has always endeared you to them personally, has enabled men playing their own game . . . to take out of your hands the *formation* of opinion.

On a connected aspect of the same thing, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Rosebery (Sept. 16, 1880):—

> . . . All this is too long to bore people with—and yet it is not so long, nor so interesting, as one at least of the subjects which we just touched in conversation at Mentmore; the future of politics, and the food they offer to the mind. What is outside parliament seems to me to be fast mounting, nay to have already mounted, to an importance much exceeding what is inside. Parliament deals with laws, and branches of the social tree, not with the root. I always admired Mrs. Grote's saying that politics and theology were the only two really great subjects; it was wonderful considering the atmosphere in which she had lived. I do not doubt which of the two she would have put in the first place; and to

theology I have no doubt she would have given a wide sense, as including everything that touches the relation between the seen and the unseen.

What is curious to note is that, though Mr. Gladstone in making his cabinet had thrown the main weight against the radicals, yet when they got to work, it was with them he found himself more often than not in energetic agreement. In common talk and in partisan speeches, the prime minister was regarded as dictatorial and imperious. The complaint of some at least among his colleagues in the cabinet of 1880 was rather that he was not imperious enough. Almost from the first he too frequently allowed himself to be over-ruled; often in secondary matters, it is true, but sometimes also in matters on the uncertain frontier between secondary and primary. Then he adopted a practice of taking votes and counting numbers, of which more than one old hand complained as an innovation. Lord Granville said to him in 1886, 'I think you too often counted noses in your last cabinet.'

What Mr. Gladstone described as the severest fight that he had ever known in any cabinet occurred in 1883, upon the removal of the Duke of Wellington's statue from Hyde Park Corner. A vote took place, and three times over he took down the names. He was against removal, but was unable to have his own way over the majority. Members of the government thought themselves curiously free to walk out from divisions. On a Transvaal division two members of the cabinet abstained, and so did two other ministers out of the cabinet. In other cases, the same thing happened, not only breaking discipline, but breeding much trouble with the Queen. Then an unusual number of men of ability and of a degree of self-esteem not below their ability, had been left out of the inner circle; and they and their backers were sometimes apt to bring their pretensions rather fretfully forward. These were the things that to Mr. Gladstone's temperament proved more harassing than graver concerns.

II

All through the first two months of its business, the House showed signs of independence that almost broke the spirit of the ministerial whips. A bill about hares and rabbits produced lively excitement, ministerialists moved amendments upon the measure of their own leaders, and the minister in charge boldly taxed the mutineers with insincerity. A motion for local option was carried by 229 to 203, both Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington in the minority. On a motion about clerical restrictions, only a strong and conciliatory appeal from the prime minister averted defeat. A more remarkable demonstration soon followed. The Prince Imperial, unfortunate son of unfortunate sire, who had undergone his famous baptism of fire in the first

reverses among the Vosges in the Franco-German war of 1870, was killed in our war in Zululand. Parliament was asked to sanction a vote of money for a memorial of him in the Abbey. A radical member brought forward a motion against it. Both Mr. Gladstone and Sir Stafford Northcote resisted him, yet by a considerable majority the radical carried his point. The feeling was so strong among the ministerialists, that notwithstanding Mr. Gladstone's earnest exhortation, they voted almost to a man against him, and he only carried into the lobby ten official votes on the treasury bench.

The great case in which the government were taken to have missed the import of the election was the failure to recall Sir Bartle Frere from South Africa. On this I shall have enough to say by and by. Meanwhile it gave an undoubted shock to the confidence of the party, and their energetic remonstrance on this head strained Mr. Gladstone's authority to the uttermost. The Queen complained of the tendency of the House of Commons to trench upon the business of the executive. Mr. Gladstone said in reply generally, that no doubt within the half century 'there had been considerable invasion by the House of Commons of the province assigned by the constitution to the executive,' but he perceived no increase in recent times or in the present House. Then he proceeded (June 8, 1880):—

> . . . Your Majesty may possibly have in view the pressure which has been exercised on the present government in the case of Sir Bartle Frere. But apart from the fact that this pressure represents a feeling which extends far beyond the walls of parliament, your Majesty may probably remember that, in the early part of 1835, the House of Commons addressed the crown against the appointment of Lord Londonderry to be ambassador at St. Petersburg, on account, if Mr. Gladstone remembers rightly, of a general antecedent disapproval. This was an exercise of power going far beyond what has happened now; nor does it seem easy in principle to place the conduct of Sir B. Frere beyond that general right of challenge and censure which is unquestionably within the function of parliament and especially of the House of Commons.

In the field where mastery had never failed him, Mr. Gladstone achieved an early success, and he lost no time in justifying his assumption of the exchequer. The budget (June 10) was marked by the boldness of former days, and was explained and defended in one of those statements of which he alone possessed the secret. Even unfriendly witnesses agreed that it was many years since the House of Commons had the opportunity of enjoying so extraordinary an intellectual treat, where 'novelties assumed the air of indisputable truths, and complicated figures were woven into the thread of intelligible and animated narrative.' He converted the malt tax into a beer duty, reduced the duties on light foreign wines, added a penny to the income-tax, and adjusted the licence duties for the sale of alcoholic liquors. Everybody said that 'none but a *cordon*

bleu could have made such a sauce with so few materials.' The dish was exellently received, and the ministerial party were in high spirits. The conservatives stood angry and amazed that their own leaders had found no device for the repeal of the malt duty. The farmer's friends, they cried, had been in office for six years and had done nothing; no sooner is Gladstone at the exchequer than with magic wand he effects a transformation, and the long-suffering agriculturist has justice and relief.

In the course of an effort that seemed to show full vigour of body and mind, Mr. Gladstone incidentally mentioned that when a new member he recollected hearing a speech upon the malt tax in the old House of Commons in the year 1833. Yet the lapse of nearly half a century of life in that great arena had not relaxed his stringent sense of parliamentary duty. During most of the course of this first session, he was always early in his place and always left late. In every discussion he came to the front, and though an under-secretary made the official reply, it was the prime minister who wound up. One night he made no fewer than six speeches, touching all the questions raised in a miscellaneous night's sitting.

In the middle of the summer Mr. Gladstone fell ill. Consternation reigned in London. It even exceeded the dismay caused by the defeat at Maiwand. A friend went to see him as he lay in bed. 'He talked most of the time, not on politics, but on Shakespeare's Henry VIII., and the decay of theological study at Oxford. He never intended his reform measure to produce this result.' After his recovery, he went for a cruise in the *Grantully Castle*, not returning to parliament until September 4, three days before the session ended, when he spoke with all his force on the eastern question.

III

In the electoral campaign Mr. Gladstone had used expressions about Austria that gave some offence at Vienna. On coming into power he volunteered an assurance to the Austrian ambassador that he would willingly withdraw his language if he understood that he had misapprehended the circumstances. The ambassador said that Austria meant strictly to observe the treaty of Berlin. Mr. Gladstone then expressed his regret for the words 'of a painful and wounding character' that had fallen from him. At the time, he explained, he was 'in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility.'

At the close of the session of 1880, ministers went to work upon the unfulfilled portions of the Berlin treaty relating to Greece and Montenegro. Those stipulations were positive in the case of Montenegro; as to Greece they were less definite, but they absolutely implied a cession of more or less territory by Turkey. They formed the basis of Lord Salisbury's cor-

respondence, but his arguments and representations were without effect.

Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues went further. They proposed and obtained a demonstration off the Albanian coast on behalf of Montenegro. Each great Power sent a man-of-war, but the concert of Europe instantly became what Mr. Gladstone called a farce, for Austria and Germany made known that under no circumstances would they fire a shot. France rather less prominently took the same course. This defection, which was almost boastful on the part of Austria and Germany, convinced the British cabinet that Turkish obduracy would only be overcome by force, and the question was how to apply force effectually with the least risk to peace. As it happened, the port of Smyrna received an amount of customs duties too considerable for the Porte to spare it. The idea was that the united fleet at Cattaro should straightway sail to Smyrna and lay hold upon it. The cabinet, with experts from the two fighting departments, weighed carefully all the military responsibilities, and considered the sequestration of the customs' dues at Smyrna to be practicable. Russia and Italy were friendly. France had in a certain way assumed special cognizance of the Greek case, but did nothing particular. From Austria and Germany nothing was to be hoped. On October 4, the Sultan refused the joint European request for the fulfilment of the engagements entered into at Berlin. This refusal was despatched in ignorance of the intention to coerce. The British government had only resolved upon coercion in concert with Europe. Full concert was now out of the question. But on the morning of Sunday, the 10th, Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville learned with as much surprise as delight from Mr. Goschen, then ambassador extraordinary at Constantinople, that the Sultan had heard of the British proposal of force, and apparently had not heard of the two refusals. On learning how far England had gone, he determined to give way on both the territorial questions. As Mr. Gladstone enters in his diary, 'a faint tinge of doubt remained.' That is to say, the Sultan might find out the rift in the concert and retract. Russia, however, had actually agreed to force. On Tuesday, the 12th, Mr. Gladstone, meeting Lord Granville and another colleague, was 'under the circumstances prepared to proceed *en trois*.' The other two 'rathered differed.' Of course it would have been for the whole cabinet to decide. But between eleven and twelve Lord Granville came in with the news that the note had arrived and all was well. 'The whole of this extraordinary volte-face,' as Mr. Gladstone said with some complacency, 'had been effected within six days; and it was entirely due not to a threat of coercion from Europe, but to the knowledge that Great Britain had asked Europe to coerce.' Dulcigno was ceded by the Porte to Montenegro. On the Greek side of the case, the

minister for once was less ardent than for the complete triumph of his heroic Montenegrins, but after tedious negotiations Mr. Gladstone had the satisfaction of seeing an important rectification of the Greek frontier, almost restoring his Homeric Greece. The eastern question looked as if it might fall into one of its fitful slumbers once more, but we shall soon see that this was illusory. Mr. Goschen left Constantinople in May, and the prime minister said to him (June 3, 1881):—

> I write principally for the purpose of offering you my hearty congratulations on the place you have taken in diplomacy by force of mind and character, and on the services which, in thus far serving the most honourable aims a man can have, you have rendered to liberty and humanity.

Only in Afghanistan was there a direct reversal of the policy of the fallen government. The new cabinet were not long in deciding on a return to the older policy in respect of the north-west frontier of India. All that had happened since it had been abandoned, strengthened the case against the new departure. The policy that had been pursued amid so many lamentable and untoward circumstances, including the destruction of a very gallant agent of England at Cabul, had involved the incorporation of Candahar within the sphere of the Indian system. Mr. Gladstone and his cabinet determined on the evacuation of Candahar. The decision was made public in the royal speech of the following January (1881). Lord Hartington stated the case of the government with masterly and crushing force, in a speech,[1] which is no less than a strong text-book of the whole argument, if any reader should now desire to comprehend it. The evacuation was censured in the Lords by 165 against 79; in the Commons ministers carried the day by a majority of 120.

[1] March 25-6, 1881.

CHAPTER II

AN EPISODE IN TOLERATION

(*1880–1883*)

The state in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve it, that satisfies. . . . Take heed of being sharp, or too easily sharpened by others, against those to whom you can object little but that they square not with you in every opinion concerning matters of religion.

OLIVER CROMWELL.

ONE discordant refrain rang hoarsely throughout the five years of this administration, and its first notes were heard even before Mr. Gladstone had taken his seat. It drew him into a controversy that was probably more distasteful to him than any other of the myriad contentions, small and great, with which his life was encumbered. Whether or not he threaded his way with his usual skill through a labyrinth of parliamentary tactics incomparably intricate, experts may dispute, but in an ordeal beyond the region of tactics he never swerved from the path alike of liberty and common-sense. It was a question of exacting the oath of allegiance before a member could take his seat.

Mr. Bradlaugh, the new member for Northampton, who now forced the question forward, as O'Connell had forced forward the civil equality of catholics, and Rothschild and others the civil equality of Jews, was a free-thinker of a daring and defiant type. Blank negation could go no further. He had abundant and genuine public spirit, and a strong love of truth according to his own lights, and he was both a brave and a disinterested man. This hard-grit secularism of his was not the worst of his offences in the view of the new majority and their constituents. He had published an impeachment of the House of Brunswick, which few members of parliament had ever heard of or looked at. But even abstract republicanism was not the worst. What placed him at extreme disadvantage in fighting the battle in which he was now engaged, was his republication of a pamphlet by an American doctor on that impracticable question of population, which though too rigorously excluded from public discussion, confessedly lies among the roots of most other social questions. For this he had some years before been indicted in

the courts, and had only escaped conviction and punishment by a technicality. It was Mr. Bradlaugh's refusal to take the oath in a court of justice that led to the law of 1869, enabling a witness to affirm instead of swearing. He now carried the principle a step further.

When the time came, the Speaker (April 29) received a letter from the iconoclast, claiming to make an affirmation, instead of taking the oath of allegiance.[1] He consulted his legal advisers, and they gave an opinion strongly adverse to the claim. On this the Speaker wrote to Mr. Gladstone and to Sir Stafford Northcote, stating his concurrence in the opinion of the lawyers, and telling them that he should leave the question to the House. His practical suggestion was that on his statement being made, a motion should be proposed for a select committee. The committee was duly appointed, and it reported by a majority of one, against a minority that contained names so weighty as Sir Henry James, Herschell, Whitbread, and Bright, that the claim to affirm was not a good claim. So opened a series of incidents that went on as long as the parliament, clouded the radiance of the party triumph, threw the new government at once into a minority, dimmed the ascendency of the great minister, and what was more, showed human nature at its worst. The incidents themselves are in detail not worth recalling here, but they are a striking episode in the history of toleration, as well as a landmark in Mr. Gladstone's journey from the day five-and-forty years before when, in reference to Molesworth as candidate for Leeds, he had told his friends at Newark that men who had no belief in divine revelation were not the men to govern this nation whether they be whigs or radicals.[2]

His claim to affirm having been rejected, Bradlaugh next desired to swear. The ministerial whip reported that the feeling against him in the House was uncontrollable. The Speaker held a council in his library with Mr. Gladstone, the law officers, the whip, and two or three other persons of authority and sense. He told them that if Bradlaugh had in the first instance come to take the oath, he should have allowed no intervention, but that the case was altered by the claimant's open declaration that an oath was not binding on his conscience. A hostile motion was expected when Bradlaugh came to the table to be sworn, and the Speaker suggested that it should be met by the previous question, to be moved by Mr. Gladstone. Then the whip broke in with the assurance that the usual supporters of the government could not be relied upon. The Speaker went upstairs to dress, and on his return found that they had agreed on moving another select committee. He

[1] Bradlaugh, who was a little vain of his legal skill, founded this claim upon the Evidence Amendment Act, taken in connection with the Parliamentary Oaths and other Acts.

[2] See vol. i. p. 102.

told them that he thought this a weak course, but if the previous question should be defeated, perhaps a committee could not be helped. Bradlaugh came to the table, and the hostile motion was made. Mr. Gladstone proposed his committee, and carried it by a good majority against the motion that Bradlaugh, being without religious belief, could not take an oath. The debate was warm, and the attacks on Bradlaugh were often gross. The Speaker honourably pointed out that such attacks on an elected member whose absence was enforced by their own order, were unfair and unbecoming, but the feelings of the House were too strong for him and too strong for chivalry. The opposition turned affairs to ignoble party account, and were not ashamed in their prints and elsewhere to level the charge of 'open patronage of unbelief and Malthusianism, Bradlaugh and Blasphemy,' against a government that contained Gladstone, Bright, and Selborne, three of the most conspicuously devout men to be found in all England. One expression of faith used by a leader in the attack on Bradlaugh lived in Mr. Gladstone's memory to the end of his days. 'You know, Mr. Speaker,' cried the champion of orthodox creeds, 'we all of us believe in a God of some sort or another.' That a man should consent to clothe the naked human soul in this truly singular and scanty remnant of spiritual apparel, was held to be the unalterable condition of fitness for a seat in parliament and the company of decent people. Well might Mr. Gladstone point out how vast a disparagement of Christianity, and of orthodox theism also, was here involved :—

They say this, that you may go any length you please in the denial of religion, provided only you do not reject the name of the Deity. They tear religion into shreds, so to speak, and say that there is one particular shred with which nothing will ever induce them to part. They divide religion into the dispensable and the indispensable, and among that kind which can be dispensed with—I am not now speaking of those who declare, or are admitted, under a special law, I am not speaking of Jews or those who make a declaration, I am speaking solely of those for whom no provision is made except the provision of oath—they divide, I say, religion into what can and what cannot be dispensed with. There is something, however, that cannot be dispensed with. I am not willing, Sir, that Christianity, if the appeal is made to us as a Christian legislature, shall stand in any rank lower than that which is indispensable. I may illustrate what I mean. Suppose a commander has to despatch a small body of men on an expedition on which it is necessary for them to carry on their backs all that they can take with them ; the men will part with everything that is unnecessary, and take only that which is essential. That is the course you ask us to take in drawing us upon theological ground ; you require us to distinguish between superfluities and necessaries, and you tell us that Christianity is one of the superfluities, one of the excrescences, and has nothing to do with the vital substance, the name of the Deity, which is indispensable. I say that the adoption of such a

proposition as that, which is in reality at the very root of your contention, is disparaging in the very highest degree to the Christian faith. . . .[1]

Even viewed as a theistic test, he contended, this oath embraced no acknowledgment of Providence, of divine government, of responsibility, or retribution; it involved nothing but a bare and abstract admission, a form void of all practical meaning and concern.

The House, however, speedily showed how inaccessible were most of its members to reason and argument of this kind or any kind. On June 21, Mr. Gladstone thus described the proceedings to the Queen. 'With the renewal of the discussion,' he wrote, 'the temper of the House does not improve, both excitement and suspicion appearing to prevail in different quarters.' A motion made by Mr. Bradlaugh's colleague that he should be permitted to affirm, was met by a motion that he should not be allowed either to affirm or to swear.

To the Queen.

Many warm speeches were made by the opposition in the name of religion; to those Mr. Bright has warmly replied in the name of religious liberty. The contention on the other side really is that as to a certain ill-defined fragment of truth the House is still, under the Oaths Act, the guardian of religion. The primary question, whether the House has jurisdiction under the statute, is almost hopelessly mixed with the question whether an atheist, who has declared himself an atheist, ought to sit in parliament. Mr. Gladstone's own view is that the House has no jurisdiction for the purpose of excluding any one willing to qualify when he has been duly elected; but he is very uncertain how the House will vote or what will be the end of the business, if the House undertakes the business of exclusion.

June 22.—The House of Commons has been occupied from the commencement of the evening until a late hour with the adjourned debate on the case of Mr. Bradlaugh. The divided state of opinion in the House made itself manifest throughout the evening. Mr. Newdegate made a speech which turned almost wholly upon the respective merits of theism and atheism. Mr. Gladstone thought it his duty to advise the House to beware of entangling itself in difficulties possibly of a serious character, by assuming a jurisdiction in cases of this class.

At one o'clock in the morning, the first great division was taken, and the House resolved by 275 votes against 230 that Mr. Bradlaugh should neither affirm nor swear. The excitement at this result was tremendous. Some minutes elapsed before the Speaker could declare the numbers. 'Indeed,' wrote Mr. Gladstone to the Queen, 'it was an ecstatic transport, and exceeded anything which Mr. Gladstone remembers to have witnessed. He read in it only a witness to the dangers of the course on which the House has entered, and to its unfitness for the office which it has rashly chosen to assume.' He might also

[1] Speech on second reading of Affirmation bill, 1883.

have read in it, if he had liked, the exquisite delight of the first stroke of revenge for Midlothian.

The next day (June 23) the matter entered on a more violent phase.

To the Queen.

This day, when the Speaker took the chair at a quarter past twelve, Mr. Bradlaugh came to the table and claimed to take the oath. The Speaker read to him the resolution of the House which forbids it. Mr. Bradlaugh asked to be heard, and no objection was taken. He then addressed the House from the bar. His address was that of a consummate speaker. But it was an address which could not have any effect unless the House had undergone a complete revolution of mind. He challenged the legality of the act of the House, expressing hereby an opinion in which Mr. Gladstone himself, going beyond some other members of the minority, has the misfortune to lean towards agreeing with him. . . . The Speaker now again announced to Mr. Bradlaugh the resolution of the House. Only a small minority voted against enforcing it. Mr. Bradlaugh declining to withdraw, was removed by the serjeant-at-arms. Having suffered this removal, he again came beyond the bar, and entered into what was almost a corporal struggle with the serjeant. Hereupon Sir S. Northcote moved that Mr. Bradlaugh be committed for his offence. Mr. Gladstone said that while he thought it did not belong to him, under the circumstances of the case, to advise the House, he could take no objection to the advice thus given.

The Speaker, it may be said, thought this view of Mr. Gladstone's a mistake, and that when Bradlaugh refused to withdraw, the leader of the House ought, as a matter of policy, to have been the person to move first the order to withdraw, next the committal to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms. 'I was placed in a false position,' says the Speaker, 'and so was the House, in having to follow the lead of the leader of the opposition, while the leader of the House and the great majority were passive spectators.'[1] As Mr. Gladstone and other members of the government voted for Bradlaugh's committal, on the ground that his resistance to the serjeant had nothing to do with the establishment of his rights before either a court or his constituency, it would seem that the Speaker's complaint is not unjust. To this position, however, Mr. Gladstone adhered, in entire conformity apparently to the wishes of the keenest members of his cabinet and the leading men of his party.

The Speaker wrote to Sir Stafford Northcote urging on him the propriety of allowing Bradlaugh to take the oath without question. But Northcote was forced on against his better judgment by his more ardent supporters. It was a strange and painful situation, and the party system assuredly did not work at its best—one leading man forced on to mischief by the least responsible of his sections, the other held back from providing a cure by the narrowest of the other sections. In the April of

[1] *Lord Hampden's Diaries.*

1881 Mr. Gladstone gave notice of a bill providing for affirmation, but it was immediately apparent that the opposition would make the most of every obstacle to a settlement, and the proposal fell through. In August of this year the Speaker notes, 'The difficulties in the way of settling this question satisfactorily are great, and in the present temper of the House almost insuperable.'

II

It is not necessary to recount all the stages of this protracted struggle: what devices and expedients and motions, how many odious scenes of physical violence, how many hard-fought actions in the lawcourts, how many conflicts between the House of Commons and the constituency, what glee and rubbing of hands in the camp of the opposition at having thrust their rivals deep into a quagmire so unpleasant. The scandal was intolerable, but ministers were helpless, as a marked incident now demonstrated. It was not until 1883 that a serious attempt was made to change the law. The Affirmation bill of that year has a biographic place, because it marks in a definite way how far Mr. Gladstone's mind—perhaps not, as I have said before, by nature or by instinct peculiarly tolerant—had travelled along one of the grand highroads of human progress. The occasion was for many reasons one of great anxiety. Here are one or two short entries, the reader remembering that by this time the question was two years old:—

April 24, *Tuesday.*—On Sunday night a gap of three hours in my sleep was rather ominous; but it was not repeated. . . . Saw the Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom I had a very long conversation on the Affirmation bill and on Church and State policy generally as well as on special subjects. . . . Globe Theatre in the evening; excellent acting. . . . 25.—. . . Worked on Oaths question. . . . 26.— . . . Made a long and *begeistert*[1] speech on the Affirmation bill, taking the bull by the horns.

His speech upon this measure was a noble effort. It was delivered under circumstances of unsurpassed difficulty, for there was revolt in the party, the client was repugnant, the opinions brought into issue were to Mr. Gladstone hateful. Yet the speech proved one of his greatest. Imposing, lofty, persuasive, sage it would have been, from whatever lips it might have fallen; it was signal indeed as coming from one so fervid, so definite, so unfaltering in a faith of his own, one who had started from the opposite pole to that great civil principle of which he now displayed a grasp invincible. If it be true of a writer that the best style is that which most directly flows from living qualities in the writer's own mind and is a pattern of their actual working, so is the same thing to be said of oratory. These high themes of Faith, on the one hand, and Freedom on

[1] Perhaps the best equivalent for *begeistert* here is '*daemonic.*'

the other, exactly fitted the range of the thoughts in which Mr. Gladstone habitually lived. 'I have no fear of Atheism in this House,' he said; 'Truth is the expression of the Divine mind, and however little our feeble vision may be able to discern the means by which God may provide for its preservation, we may leave the matter in His hands, and we may be sure that a firm and courageous application of every principle of equity and of justice is the best method we can adopt for the preservation and influence of Truth.' This was Mr. Gladstone at his sincerest and his highest. I wonder, too, if there has been a leader in parliament since the seventeenth century, who could venture to address it in the strain of the memorable passage now to be transcribed:—

You draw your line at the point where the abstract denial of God is severed from the abstract admission of the Deity. My proposition is that the line thus drawn is worthless, and that much on your side of the line is as objectionable as the atheism on the other. If you call upon us to make distinctions, let them at least be rational; I do not say let them be Christian distinctions, but let them be rational. I can understand one rational distinction, that you should frame the oath in such a way as to recognise not only the existence of the Deity, but the providence of the Deity, and man's responsibility to the Deity; and in such a way as to indicate the knowledge in a man's own mind that he must answer to the Deity for what he does, and is able to do. But is that your present rule? No, Sir, you know very well that from ancient times there have been sects and schools that have admitted in the abstract as freely as Christians the existence of a Deity, but have held that of practical relations between Him and man there can be none. Many of the members of this House will recollect the majestic and noble lines—

> Omnis enim per se divom natura necesse est
> Immortali ævo summa cum pace fruatur,
> Semota a nostris rebus sejunctaque longe
> Nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
> Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
> Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira.[1]

'Divinity exists'—according to these, I must say, magnificent lines—'in remote and inaccessible recesses; but with us it has no dealing, of us it has no need, with us it has no relation.' I do not hesitate to say that the specific evil, the specific form of irreligion, with which in the educated society of this country you have to contend, and with respect to which you ought to be on your guard, is not blank atheism. That is a rare opinion very seldom met with; but what is frequently met with is that form of opinion which would teach us that, whatever may be beyond the visible things of this world, whatever there may be beyond this short span of life, you know and you can know nothing of it, and that it is a bootless undertaking to attempt to establish relations with it. That is the mischief of the age, and that mischief you do not attempt to touch.

The House, though but few perhaps recollected their

[1] Lucretius, ii. 646. 'For the nature of the gods must ever of itself enjoy repose supreme through endless time, far withdrawn from all concerns of ours; free from all our pains, free from all our perils, strong in resources of its own, needing nought from us, no favours win it, no anger moves.'

Lucretius or had ever even read him, sat, as I well remember, with reverential stillness, hearkening from this born master of moving cadence and high sustained modulation to 'the rise and long roll of the hexameter,'—to the plangent lines that have come down across the night of time to us from great Rome. But all these impressions of sublime feeling and strong reasoning were soon effaced by honest bigotry, by narrow and selfish calculation, by flat cowardice. The relieving bill was cast out by a majority of three. The catholics in the main voted against it, and many nonconformists, hereditary champions of all the rights of private judgment, either voted against it or did not vote at all. So soon in these affairs, as the world has long ago found out, do bodies of men forget in a day of power the maxims that they held sacred and inviolable in days when they were weak.

The drama did not end here. In that parliament Bradlaugh was never allowed to discharge his duty as a member, but when after the general election of 1885, being once more chosen by Northampton, he went to the table to take the oath, as in former days Mill and others of like non-theologic complexion had taken it, the Speaker would suffer no intervention against him. Then in 1888, though the majority was conservative, Bradlaugh himself secured the passing of an affirmation law. Finally, in the beginning of 1891, upon the motion of a Scotch member, supported by Mr. Gladstone, the House formally struck out from its records the resolution of June 22, 1881, that had been passed, as we have seen, amid 'ecstatic transports.' Bradlaugh then lay upon his deathbed, and was unconscious of what had been done. Mr. Gladstone a few days later, in moving a bill of his own to discard a lingering case of civil disability attached to religious profession, made a last reference to Mr. Bradlaugh :—

> A distinguished man, he said, and admirable member of this House, was laid yesterday in his mother-earth. He was the subject of a long controversy in this House—a controversy the beginning of which we recollect, and the ending of which we recollect. We remember with what zeal it was prosecuted; we remember how summarily it was dropped; we remember also what reparation has been done within the last few days to the distinguished man who was the immediate object of that controversy. But does anybody who hears me believe that that controversy, so prosecuted and so abandoned, was beneficial to the Christian religion?[1]

[1] Religious Disabilities Removal bill, Feb. 4, 1891.

CHAPTER III

MAJUBA

(*1880–1881*)

εἰς ἀπέραντον δίκτυον ἄτης
ἐμπλεχθήσεσθ' ὑπ' ἀνοίας.
ÆSCH. *Prom.* 1078.

In a boundless coil of mischief pure senselessness will entangle you.

IT would almost need the pen of Tacitus or Dante to tell the story of European power in South Africa. For forty years, said Mr. Gladstone in 1881, 'I have always regarded the South African question as the one great unsolved and perhaps insoluble problem of our colonial system.' Among the other legacies of the forward policy that the constituencies had decisively condemned in 1880, this insoluble problem rapidly became acute and formidable.

One of the great heads of impeachment in Midlothian had been a war undertaken in 1878-9 against a fierce tribe on the borders of the colony of Natal. The author and instrument of the Zulu war was Sir Bartle Frere, a man of tenacious character and grave and lofty if ill-calculated aims. The conservative government, as I have already said,[1] without enthusiasm assented, and at one stage they even formally censured him. When Mr. Gladstone acceded to office, the expectation was universal that Sir Bartle would be at once recalled. At the first meeting of the new cabinet (May 3) it was decided to retain him. The prime minister at first was his marked protector. The substantial reason against recall was that his presence was needed to carry out the policy of confederation, and towards confederation it was hoped that the Cape parliament was immediately about to take a long preliminary step. 'Confederation,' Mr. Gladstone said, 'is the pole-star of the present action of our government.' In a few weeks, for a reason that will be mentioned in treating the second episode of this chapter, confederation broke down. A less substantial,

[1] Above, p. 143.

but still not wholly inoperative reason, was the strong feeling of the Queen for the high commissioner. The royal prepossessions notwithstanding, and in spite of the former leanings of Mr. Gladstone, the cabinet determined, at the end of July, that Sir Bartle should be recalled. The whole state of the case is made sufficiently clear in the two following communications from the prime minister to the Queen :—

To the Queen.

May 28, 1880.—Mr. Gladstone presents his humble duty, and has had the honour to receive your Majesty's telegram respecting Sir B. Frere. Mr. Gladstone used on Saturday his best efforts to avert a movement for his dismissal, which it was intended by a powerful body of members on the liberal side to promote by a memorial to Mr. Gladstone, and by a motion in the House. He hopes that he has in some degree succeeded, and he understands that it is to be decided on Monday whether they will at present desist or persevere. Of course no sign will be given by your Majesty's advisers which could tend to promote perseverance, at the same time Mr. Gladstone does not conceal from himself two things: the first, that the only chance of Sir B. Frere's remaining seems to depend upon his ability to make progress in the matter of confederation ; the second, that if the agitation respecting him in the House, the press, and the country should continue, confidence in him may be so paralysed as to render his situation intolerable to a high-minded man and to weaken his hands fatally for any purpose of good.

July 29, 1880.—It was not without some differences of opinion among themselves that, upon their accession to office, the cabinet arrived at the conclusion that, if there was a prospect of progress in the great matter of confederation, this might afford a ground of co-operation between them and Sir B. Frere, notwithstanding the strong censures which many of them in opposition had pronounced upon his policy. This conclusion gave the liveliest satisfaction to a large portion, perhaps to the majority of the House of Commons ; but they embraced it with the more satisfaction because of your Majesty's warm regard for Sir B. Frere, a sentiment which some among them personally share.

It was evident, however, and it was perhaps in the nature of the case, that a confidence thus restricted was far from agreeable to Sir B. Frere, who, in the opinion of Mr. Gladstone, has only been held back by a commendable self-restraint and sense of duty, from declaring himself aggrieved. Thus, though the cabinet have done the best they could, his standing-ground was not firm, nor could they make it so. But the total failure of the effort made to induce the Cape parliament to move, has put confederation wholly out of view, for a time quite indefinite, and almost certainly considerable. Mr. Gladstone has therefore the painful duty of submitting to your Majesty, on behalf of the cabinet, the enclosed copy of a ciphered telegram of recall.

II

The breaking of the military power of the Zulus was destined to prove much less important than another proceeding closely related to it, though not drawing the same attention at the moment. I advise the reader not to grudge a rather strict

regard to the main details of transactions that, owing to unhappy events of later date, have to this day held a conspicuous place in the general controversy as to the great minister's statesmanship.

For some time past, powerful native tribes had been slowly but steadily pushing the Boers of the Transvaal back, and the inability to resist was now dangerously plain. In 1876 the Boers had been worsted in one of their incessant struggles with the native races, and this time they had barely been able to hold their own against an insignificant tribe of one of the least warlike branches. It was thought certain by English officials on the ground, that the example would not be lost on fiercer warriors, and that a native conflagration might any day burst into blaze in other regions of the immense territory. The British government despatched an agent of great local experience; he found the Boer government, which was loosely organized even at its best, now completely paralysed, without money, without internal authority, without defensive power against external foes. In alarm at the possible result of such a situation on the peace of the European domain in South Africa, he proclaimed the sovereignty of the Queen, and set up an administration. This he was empowered by secret instructions to do, if he should think fit. Here was the initial error. The secretary of state in Downing Street approved (June 21, 1877), on the express assumption that a sufficient number of the inhabitants desired to become the Queen's subjects. Some have thought that if he had waited the Boers would have sought annexation, but this seems to be highly improbable. In the annexation proclamation promises were made to the Boers of 'the fullest legislative privileges compatible with the circumstances of the country and the intelligence of the people.' An assembly was also promised.

The soundness of the assumption was immediately disputed. The Boer government protested against annexation. Two delegates — one of them Mr. Kruger — repaired to England, assured Lord Carnarvon that their fellow-Boers were vehemently opposed to annexation, and earnestly besought its reversal. The minister insisted that he was right and they were wrong. They went back, and in order to convince the government of the true strength of feeling for independence, petitions were prepared seeking the restoration of independence. The signatures were those of qualified electors of the old republic. The government were informed by Sir Garnet Wolseley that there were about 8000 persons of the age to be electors, of whom rather fewer than 7000 were Boers. To the petitions were appended almost exactly 7000 names. The colonial office recognised that the opposition of the Boers to annexation was practically unanimous. The comparatively insignificant addresses on the other side came from the town

and digging population, which was as strong in favour of the suppression of the old republic, as the rural population was strong against it.

For many months the Boers persevered. They again sent Kruger and Joubert to England; they held huge mass meetings; they poured out prayers to the high commissioner to give back their independence; they sent memorial after memorial to the secretary of state. In the autumn of 1879 Sir Garnet Wolseley assumed the administration of the Transvaal, and issued a proclamation setting forth the will and determination of the government of the Queen that this Transvaal territory should be, and should continue to be for ever, an integral part of her dominions in South Africa. In the closing days of 1879 the secretary of state, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, who had succeeded Carnarvon (Jan. 1878), received from the same eminent soldier a comprehensive despatch, warning him that the meetings of protest against annexation attended by thousands of armed men in angry mood, would be likely to end in a serious explosion. While putting all sides of the question before his government, Sir Garnet inserted one paragraph of momentous import. 'The Transvaal,' he said, 'is rich in minerals; gold has already been found in quantities, and there can be little doubt that larger and still more valuable goldfields will sooner or later be discovered. Any such discovery would soon bring a large British population here. The time must eventually arrive when the Boers will be in a small minority, as the country is very sparsely peopled, and would it not therefore be a very near-sighted policy to recede now from the position we have taken up here, simply because for some years to come, the retention of 2000 or 3000 troops may be necessary to reconsolidate our power?'[1] This pregnant and far-sighted warning seems to have been little considered by English statesmen of either party at this critical time or afterwards, though it proved a vital element in any far-sighted decision.

On March 9—the day, as it happened, on which the intention to dissolve parliament was made public—Sir Garnet telegraphed for a renewed expression of the determination of the government to retain the country, and he received the assurance that he sought. The Vaal river, he told the Boers, would flow backwards through the Drakensberg sooner than the British would be withdrawn from the Transvaal. The picturesque figure did not soften the Boer heart. This was the final share of the conservative cabinet in the unfortunate enterprise on which they had allowed the country to be launched.

III

When the question of annexation had originally come before parliament, Mr. Gladstone was silent. He was averse to it; he

[1] Sir Garnet Wolseley to Sir M. Hicks Beach, Nov. 13, 1879.

believed that it would involve us in unmixed mischief; but he felt that to make this judgment known at that period would not have had any effect towards reversing what had been done, while it might impede the chances of a good issue, slender as these might be.[1] In the discussion at the opening of the final session of the old parliament, Lord Hartington as leader of the opposition, enforcing the general doctrine that it behoved us to concentrate our resources, and to limit instead of extending the empire, took the Transvaal for an illustration. It was now conclusively proved, he said, that a large majority of the Boers were bitterly against annexation. That being so, it ought not to be considered a settled question merely because annexation had taken place; and if we should find that the balance of advantage was in favour of the restoration of independence, no false sense of dignity should stand in the way. Mr. Gladstone in Midlothian had been more reserved. In that indictment, there are only two or three references, and those comparatively fugitive and secondary, to this article of charge. There is a sentence in one of the Midlothian speeches about bringing a territory inhabited by a free European Christian republic within the limits of a monarchy, though out of 8000 persons qualified to vote, 6500 voted against it. In another sentence he speaks of the Transvaal as a country 'where we have chosen most unwisely, I am tempted to say insanely, to place ourselves in the strange predicament of the free subjects of a monarchy going to coerce the free subjects of a republic, and to compel them to accept a citizenship which they decline and refuse; but if that is to be done, it must be done by force.'[2] A third sentence completes the tale:—'If Cyprus and the Transvaal were as valuable as they are valueless, I would repudiate them because they are obtained by means dishonourable to the character of the country.' These utterances of the mighty unofficial chief and the responsible official leader of the opposition were all. The Boer republicans thought that they were enough.

On coming into power, the Gladstone government found the official evidence all to the effect that the political aspect of the Transvaal was decidedly improving. The commissioners, the administrators, the agents, were unanimous. Even those among them who insisted on the rooted dislike of the main body of the Boers to British authority, still thought that they were acquiescing, exactly as the Boers in the Cape Colony had acquiesced. Could ministers justify abandonment, without far stronger evidence than they then possessed that they could not govern the Transvaal peaceably? Among other things, they were assured that abandonment would be fatal to the prospects of confederation, and might besides entail a civil war. On May 7, Sir Bartle Frere pressed the new ministers

[1] In H. of C., Jan. 21, 1881.

[2] *Speeches in Scotland*, i. pp. 48, 63.

for an early announcement of their policy, in order to prevent the mischiefs of agitation. The cabinet decided the question on May 12, and agreed upon the terms of a telegram[1] by which Lord Kimberley was to inform Frere that the sovereignty of the Queen over the Transvaal could not be relinquished, but that he hoped the speedy accomplishment of confederation would enable free institutions to be conferred with promptitude. In other words, in spite of all that had been defiantly said by Lord Hartington, and more cautiously implied by Mr. Gladstone, the new government at once placed themselves exactly in the position of the old one.[2]

The case was stated in his usual nervous language by Mr. Chamberlain a few months later.[3] 'When we came into office,' he said, 'we were all agreed that the original annexation was a mistake, that it ought never to have been made; and there arose the question could it then be undone? We were in possession of information to the effect that the great majority of the people of the Transvaal were reconciled to annexation; we were told that if we reversed the decision of the late government, there would be a great probability of civil war and anarchy; and acting upon these representations, we decided that we could not recommend the Queen to relinquish her sovereignty. But we assured the Boers that we would take the earliest opportunity of granting to them the freest and most complete local institutions, compatible with the welfare of South Africa. It is easy to be wise after the event. It is easy to see now that we were wrong in so deciding. I frankly admit we made a mistake. Whatever the risk was, and I believe it was a great risk, of civil war and anarchy in the Transvaal, it was not so great a danger as that we actually incurred by maintaining the wrong of our predecessors.' Such was the language used by Mr. Chamberlain after special consultation with Lord Kimberley. With characteristic tenacity and that aversion ever to yield even the smallest point, which comes to a man saturated with the habit of a lifetime of debate, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Mr. Chamberlain (June 8, 1881),—'I have read with pleasure what you say of the Transvaal. Yet I am not prepared, for myself, to concede that we made a mistake in not advising a revocation of the annexation when we came in.'

At this instant a letter reached Mr. Gladstone from Kruger and Joubert (May 10, 1880), telling him that there was a firm belief among their people that truth prevailed. 'They were

[1] C. 2586, No. 8.

[2] Mr. Grant Duff, then colonial under-secretary, said in the House of Commons, May 21, 1880, 'Under the very difficult circumstances of the case, the plan which seemed likely best to conciliate the interests at once of the Boers, the natives and the English population, was that the Transvaal should receive, and receive with promptitude, as a portion of confederation, the largest possible measure of local liberties that could be granted, and that was the direction in which her Majesty's present advisers intended to move.'

[3] At Birmingham, June 1881.

confident that one day or another, by the mercy of the Lord, the reins of the imperial government would be entrusted again to men who look out for the honour and glory of England, not by acts of injustice and crushing force, but by the way of justice and good faith.' And, indeed, this belief has proven to be a good belief.' It would have been well for the Boers and well for us, if that had indeed been so. Unluckily the reply sent in Mr. Gladstone's name (June 15), informed them that obligations had now been contracted, especially towards the natives, that could not be set aside, but that consistently with the maintenance of the Queen's sovereignty over the Transvaal, ministers desired that the white inhabitants should enjoy the fullest liberty to manage their local affairs. 'We believe that this liberty may be most easily and promptly conceded to the Transvaal, as a member of a South African confederation.' Solemn and deliberate as this sounds, no step whatever was effectively taken towards conferring this full liberty, or any liberty at all.

It is worth while, on this material point, to look back. The original proclamation had promised the people the fullest legislative privileges compatible with the circumstances of the country and the intelligence of the people. Then, at a later date (April, 1877), Sir Bartle Frere met a great assemblage of Boers, and told them that they should receive, as soon as circumstances rendered it practicable, as large a measure of self-government as was enjoyed by any colony in South Africa.[1] The secretary of state had also spoken to the same effect. During the short period in which Sir Bartle Frere was connected with the administration of the Transvaal, he earnestly pressed upon the government the necessity for redeeming the promises made at the time of annexation, of the same measure of perfect self-government now enjoyed, by Cape Colony, always, of course, under the authority of the crown.[2] As the months went on, no attempt was made to fulfil all these solemn pledges, and the Boers naturally began to look on them as so much mockery. Their anger in turn increased the timidity of government, and it was argued that the first use that the Boers would make of a free constitution would be to stop the supplies. So a thing called an Assembly was set up (November 9, 1879), composed partly of British officers and partly of nominated members. This was a complete falsification of a whole set of our national promises. Still annexation might conceivably have been accepted, even the sting might have been partially taken out of the delay of the promised free institutions, if only the administration had

1 C. 2367, p. 55.

2 *Afghanistan and S. Africa*: A letter to Mr. Gladstone by Sir Bartle Frere. Murray, 1881, pp. 24-6. Frere on his return to England, once more impressed on the colonial office the necessity of speedily granting the Boers a constitution, otherwise there would be serious trouble. (*Life*, ii. p. 408.)

been considerate, judicious, and adapted to the ways and habits of the people. Instead of being all these things it was stiff, headstrong, and intensely stupid.[1]

The value of the official assurances from agents on the spot that restoration of independence would destroy the chances of confederation, and would give fuel to the fires of agitation, was speedily tested. It was precisely these results that flowed from the denial of independence. The incensed Boer leaders worked so successfully on the Cape parliament against confederation, that this favourite panacea was indefinitely hung up. Here, again, it is puzzling to know why ministers did not retrace their steps. Here, again, their blind guides in the Transvaal persisted that they knew the road; persisted that with the exception of a turbulent handful, the Boers of the Transvaal only sighed for the enjoyment of the *pax britannica*, or, if even that should happen to be not quite true, at any rate they were incapable of united action, were mortal cowards, and could never make a stand in the field. While folly of this kind was finding its way by every mail to Downing Street, violent disturbances broke out in the collection of taxes. Still Sir Owen Lanyon—who had been placed in control in the Transvaal in March 1879—assured Lord Kimberley that no serious trouble would arise (November 14). At the end of the month he still denies that there is much or any cause for anxiety. In December several thousands of Boers assembled at Paardekraal, declared for the restoration of their republic, and a general rising followed. Colley, who had succeeded General Wolseley as governor of Natal and high commissioner for south-east Africa, had been so little prepared for this, that at the end of August he had recommended a reduction of the Transvaal garrisons,[2] and even now he thought the case so little serious that he contented himself (December 4) with ordering four companies to march for the Transvaal. Then he and Lanyon began to get alarmed, and with good reason. The whole country, except three or four beleaguered British posts, fell into the hands of the Boers.

The pleas for failure to take measures to conciliate the Boers in the interval between Frere's recall and the outbreak, were that Sir Hercules Robinson had not arrived;[3] that confedera-

[1] Sir George Colley pressed Lord Kimberley in his correspondence with the reality of this grievance, and the urgency of trying to remove it. This was after the Boers had taken to arms at the end of 1880.

[2] Before the Gladstone government came into office, between August 1879 and April 1880, whilst General Wolseley was in command, the force in Natal and the Transvaal had been reduced by six batteries of artillery, three companies of engineers, one cavalry regiment, eleven battalions of infantry, and five companies of army service corps. The force at the time of the outbreak was: in Natal 1772, and in the Transvaal 1759—a total of 3531. As soon as the news of the insurrection reached London, large reinforcements were at once despatched to Colley, the first of them leaving Gibraltar on Dec. 27, 1880.

[3] Sir B. Frere was recalled on August 1, 1880, and sailed for England, September 15. Sir Hercules Robinson, his successor, did not reach the Cape until the end of January 1881. In the interval Sir George Strahan was acting governor.

tion was not yet wholly given up; that resistance to annexation was said to be abating; that time was in our favour; that the one thing indispensable to conciliate the Boers was a railway to Delagoa Bay; that this needed a treaty, and we hoped soon to get Portugal to ratify a treaty, and then we might tell the Boers that we should soon make a survey, with a view at some early date to proceed with the project, and thus all would in the end come right. So a fresh page was turned in the story of loitering unwisdom.

IV

On December 6 Mr. Brand, the sagacious president of the Orange Free State, sent a message of anxious warning to the acting governor at Cape Town, urging that means should be devised to avert an imminent collision. That message, which might possibly have wakened up the colonial office to the real state of the case, did not reach London until December 30. Excuses for this fatal delay were abundant: a wire was broken; the governor did not think himself concerned with Transvaal affairs; he sent the message on to the general, supposing that the general would send it on home; and so forth. For a whole string of the very best reasons in the world the message that might have prevented the outbreak, arrived through the slow post at Whitehall just eleven days after the outbreak had begun. Members of the legislature at the Cape urged the British government to send a special commissioner to inquire and report. The policy of giving consideration to the counsels of the Cape legislature had usually been pursued by the wiser heads concerned in South African affairs, and when the counsels of the chief of the Free State were urgent in the same direction, their weight should perhaps have been decisive. Lord Kimberley, however, did not think the moment opportune (Dec. 30).[1] Before many weeks, as it happened, a commission was indeed sent, but unfortunately not until after the mischief had been done. Meanwhile in the Queen's speech a week later an emphatic paragraph announced that the duty of vindicating her Majesty's authority had set aside for the time any plan for securing to European settlers in the Transvaal full control over their own local affairs. Seldom has the sovereign been made the mouthpiece of an utterance more shortsighted.

[1] Lord Kimberley justified this decision on the ground that it was impossible to send a commissioner to inquire and report, at a moment when our garrisons were besieged, and we had collected no troops to relieve them, and when we had just received the news that the detachment of the 94th had been cut off on the march from Lydenberg to Pretoria. "Is it not practically certain," he wrote, "that the Boers would have refused at that time to listen to any reasonable terms, and would have simply insisted that we should withdraw our troops and quit the country?" Of course, the Boer overture, some six weeks after the rejection by Lord Kimberley of the Cape proposal, and after continued military success on the side of the Boers, showed that this supposed practical certainty was the exact reverse of certain.

Again the curtain rose upon a new and memorable act. Four days after the Queen's speech, President Brand a second time appeared upon the scene (Jan. 10, 1881), with a message hoping that an effort would be made without the least delay to prevent further bloodshed. Lord Kimberley replied that provided the Boers would desist from their armed opposition, the government did not despair of making a satisfactory settlement. Two days later (Jan. 12) the president told the government that not a moment should be lost, and some one (say Chief Justice de Villiers), should be sent to the Transvaal burghers by the government, to stop further collision and with a clear and definite proposal for a settlement. 'Moments,' he said, 'are precious.' For twelve days these precious moments passed. On Jan. 26 the secretary of state informed the high commissioner at Cape Town, now Sir Hercules Robinson, that President Brand pressed for the offer of terms and conditions to the Boers through Robinson, 'provided they cease from armed opposition, making it clear to them how this is to be understood.' On this suggestion he instructed Robinson to inform Brand that if armed opposition should at once cease, the government 'would thereupon endeavour to frame such a scheme as in their belief would satisfy all friends of the Transvaal community.' Brand promptly advised that the Boers should be told of this forthwith, before the satisfactory arrangements proposed had been made more difficult by further collision. This was on Jan. 29. Unhappily on the very day before, the British force had been repulsed at Laing's Nek. Colley, on Jan. 23, had written to Joubert, calling on the Boer leaders to disperse, informing them that large forces were already arriving from England and India, and assuring them that if they would dismiss their followers, he would forward to London any statement of their grievances. It would have been a great deal more sensible to wait for an answer. Instead of waiting for an answer Colley attacked (Jan. 28) and was beaten back—the whole proceeding a rehearsal of a still more disastrous error a month later.

Brand was now more importunate than ever, earnestly urging on General Colley that the nature of the scheme should be made known to the Boers, and a guarantee undertaken that if they submitted they would not be treated as rebels. 'I have replied,' Colley tells Lord Kimberley, 'that I can give no such assurance, and can add nothing to your words.' In other correspondence he uses grim language about the deserts of some of the leaders. On this Mr. Gladstone writing to Lord Kimberley (Feb. 5), says truly enough, 'Colley with a vengeance counts his chickens before they are hatched, and his curious letter throws some light backward on the proceedings in India. His line is singularly wide of ours.' The secretary of state, finding barrack-room rigidity out of place,

directs Colley (Feb. 8) to inform Brand that the government would be ready to give all reasonable guarantees as to treatment of Boers after submission, if they ceased from armed opposition, and a scheme would be framed for permanent friendly settlement. As it happened, on the day on which this was despatched from Downing Street, Colley suffered a second check at the Ingogo River (Feb. 8). Let us note that he was always eager in his recognition of the readiness and promptitude of the military support from the government at home.[1]

Then an important move took place from the other quarter. The Boers made their first overture. It came in a letter from Kruger to Colley (Feb. 12). Its purport was fairly summarised by Colley in a telegram to the colonial secretary, and the pith of it was that Kruger and his Boers were so certain of the English government being on their side if the truth only reached them, that they would not fear the result of inquiry by a royal commission, and were ready, if troops were ordered to withdraw from the Transvaal, to retire from their position, and give such a commission a free passage. This telegram reached London on Feb. 13th, and on the 15th it was brought before the cabinet.

Mr. Gladstone immediately informed the Queen (Feb. 15), that viewing the likelihood of early and sanguinary actions, Lord Kimberley thought that the receipt of such an overture at such a juncture, although its terms were inadmissible, made it a duty to examine whether it afforded any hope of settlement. The cabinet were still more strongly inclined towards coming to terms. Any other decision would have broken up the government, for on at least one division in the House on Transvaal affairs Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain, along with three other ministers not in the cabinet, had abstained from voting. Colley was directed (Feb. 16) to inform the Boers that on their desisting from armed opposition, the government would be ready to send commissioners to develop a scheme of settlement, and that meanwhile if this proposal were accepted, the English general was authorised to agree to the suspension of hostilities. This was in substance a conditional acceptance of the Boer overture.[2] On the same day the general was told from the war office that, as respected the interval before receiving a reply from Mr. Kruger, the government did not bind his discretion, but 'we are anxious for your making arrangements to avoid effusion of blood.' The spirit of these

[1] 'I do not know whether I am indebted to you or to Mr. Childers or to both, for the continuance of H.M.'s confidence, but I shall always feel more deeply grateful than I can express; and can never forget H.M.'s gracious message of encouragement at a time of great trouble.' Colley to Kimberley, Jan. 31, 1881.

[2] 'The directions to Colley,' says Mr. Bright in a cabinet minute, 'intended to convey the offer of a suspension of hostilities on both sides, with a proposal that a commissioner should be appointed to enter into negotiations and arrangements with a view to peace.'

instructions was clear. A week later (Feb. 23) the general showed that he understood this, for he wrote to Mr. Childers that 'he would not without strong reason undertake any operation likely to bring on another engagement, until Kruger's reply was received.'[1] If he had only stood firm to this, a tragedy would have been averted.

On receiving the telegram of Feb. 16, Colley was puzzled to know what was the meaning of suspending hostilities if armed opposition were abandoned by the Boers, and he asked the plain question (Feb. 19) whether he was to leave Laing's Nek (which was in Natal territory) in Boer occupation, and our garrisons isolated and short of provisions, or was he to occupy Laing's Nek and relieve the garrisons. Colley's inquiries were instantly considered by the cabinet, and the reply settled. The garrisons were to be free to provision themselves and peaceful intercourse allowed; 'but,' Kimberley tells Colley, 'we do not mean that you should march to the relief of garrisons or occupy Laing's Nek, if the arrangement proceeds. *Fix reasonable time within which answer must be sent by Boers.*'

On Feb. 21 Colley despatched a letter to Kruger, stating that on the Boers ceasing from armed opposition, the Queen would appoint a commission. He added that 'upon this proposal being accepted *within forty-eight hours from the receipt of this letter*,' he was authorised to agree to a suspension of hostilities on the part of the British.

V

In this interval a calamity, destined to be historic, occurred, trivial in a military sense, but formidable for many years to come in the issues moral and political that it raised, and in the passions for which it became a burning watchword. On the night of Feb. 26, Colley with a force of 359 men all told, made up of three different corps, marched out of his camp and occupied Majuba Hill. The general's motives for this precipitancy are obscure. The best explanation seems to be that he observed the Boers to be pushing gradually forward on to advanced ground, and thought it well, without waiting for Kruger's reply, to seize a height lying between the Nek and his own little camp, the possession of which would make Laing's Nek untenable. He probably did not expect that his move would necessarily lead to fighting, and in fact when they saw the height occupied, the Boers did at first for a little time actually begin to retire from the Nek, though they soon changed their minds.[2] The British operation is held by military experts to have been rash; proper steps were not taken by the general to protect himself upon Majuba, the men

[1] *Life of Childers*, ii. p. 24.

[2] Colley's letter to Childers, Feb. 28, *Life of Childers*, ii. p. 24.

were not well handled, and the Boers showed determined intrepidity as they climbed steadily up the hill from platform to platform, taking from seven in the morning (Feb. 27) up to half-past eleven to advance some three thousand yards and not losing a man, until at last they scaled the crest and poured a deadly fire upon the small British force, driving them headlong from the summit, seasoned soldiers though most of them were. The general who was responsible for the disaster paid the penalty with his life. Some ninety others fell and sixty were taken prisoners.

At home the sensation was profound. The hysterical complaints about our men and officers, General Wood wrote to Childers, 'are more like French character than English used to be.' Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues had a political question to consider. Colley could not be technically accused of want of good faith in moving forward on the 26th, as the time that he had appointed had expired. But though Majuba is just inside Natal—some four miles over the border—his advance was, under the circumstances of the moment, essentially an aggressive movement. Could his defeat justify us in withdrawing our previous proposals to the Boers? Was a military miscarriage, of no magnitude in itself, to be turned into a plea for abandoning a policy deliberately adopted for what were thought powerful and decisive reasons? 'Suppose, for argument's sake,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Kimberley when the sinister news arrived (Mar. 2), 'that at the moment when Colley made the unhappy attack on Majuba Hill, there shall turn out to have been decided on, and possibly on its way, a satisfactory or friendly reply from the Boer government to your telegram? I fear the chances may be against this; but if it prove to be the case, we could not because we had failed on Sunday last, insist on shedding more blood.' As it happened, the Boer answer was decided on before the attack at Majuba, and was sent to Colley by Kruger at Heidelberg in ignorance of the event, the day after the ill-fated general's death. The members of the Transvaal government set out their gratitude for the declaration that under certain conditions the government of the Queen was inclined to cease hostilities; and expressed their opinion that a meeting of representatives from both sides would probably lead with all speed to a satisfactory result. This reply was despatched by Kruger on the day on which Colley's letter of the 21st came into his hands (Feb. 28), and it reached Colley's successor on March 7.

Sir Evelyn Wood, now after the death of Colley in chief command, throughout recommended military action. Considering the disasters we had sustained, he thought the happiest result would be that after a successful battle, which he hoped to fight in about a fortnight, the Boers would

disperse without any guarantee, and many now in the field against their will would readily settle down. He explained that by happy result, he did not mean that a series of actions fought by any six companies could affect our military prestige, but that a British victory would enable the Boer leaders to quench a fire that had got beyond their control. The next day after this recommendation to fight (March 6), he, of his own motion, accepted a proposal telegraphed from Joubert at the instigation of the indefatigable Brand, for a suspension of hostilities for eight days, for the purpose of receiving Kruger's reply. There was a military reason behind. General Wood knew that the garrison in Potchefstrom must surrender unless the place were revictualled, and three other beleaguered garrisons were in almost equal danger. The government at once told him that his armistice was approved. This armistice, though Wood's reasons were military rather than diplomatic, virtually put a stop to suggestions for further fighting, for it implied, and could in truth mean nothing else, that if Kruger's reply were promising, the next step would not be a fight, but the continuance of negotiation. Sir Evelyn Wood had not advised a fight for the sake of restoring military prestige, but to make it easier for the Boer leaders to break up bands that were getting beyond their control. There was also present in his mind the intention, if the government would sanction it, of driving the Boers out of Natal, as soon as ever he had got his men up across the swollen river. So far from sanctioning it, the government expressly forbade him to take offensive action. On March 8, General Wood telegraphed home : 'Do not imagine I wish to fight. I know the attending misery too well. But now you have so many troops coming, I recommend decisive though lenient action ; and I can, humanly speaking, promise victory. Sir G. Colley never engaged more than six companies. I shall use twenty and two regiments of cavalry in direction known to myself only, and undertake to enforce dispersion.' This then was General Wood's view. On the day before he sent this telegram, the general already had received Kruger's reply to the effect that they were anxious to negotiate, and it would be best for commissioners from the two sides to meet. It is important to add that the government were at the same time receiving urgent warnings from President Brand that Dutch sympathy, both in the Cape Colony and in the Orange Free State, with the Dutch in the Transvaal, was growing dangerous, and that the prolongation of hostilities would end in a formidable extension of their area.[1] Even in January Lanyon had told Colley that men from the Free State were in the field against him. Three days before Majuba, Lord Kimberley had written to Colley (February 24), 'My great fear has been lest the Free

[1] See Selborne's *Memorials*, ii. p. 3, and also a speech by Lord Kimberley at Newcastle, Nov. 14, 1899.

State should take part against us, or even some movement take place in the Cape Colony. If our willingness to come to terms has avoided such a calamity, I shall consider it will have been a most important point gained.'[1]

Two memoranda for the Queen show the views of the cabinet on the new position of affairs:—

To the Queen.

March 8, 1881.—The cabinet considered with much care the terms of the reply to Sir Evelyn Wood's telegram reporting (not textually) the answer of the Boer leaders to the proposals which Sir George Colley had sent to them. They felt justified in construing the Boer answer as leaving the way open to the appointment of commissioners, according to the telegram previously seen and approved by your Majesty. They were anxious to keep the question moving in this direction, and under the extreme urgency of the circumstances as to time, they have despatched a telegram to Sir Evelyn Wood accordingly. Mr. Gladstone has always urged, and still feels, that the proposal of the Boers for the appointment of commissioners was fortunate on this among other grounds, that it involved a recognition of your Majesty's *de facto* authority in the Transvaal.

March 12.—The cabinet determined, in order to obviate misapprehension or suspicion, to desire Sir E. Wood to inform the government from what quarter the suggestion of an armistice actually proceeded. They agreed that the proper persons to be appointed as commissioners were Sir H. Robinson, Sir E. Wood, and Mr. De Villiers, chief justice of the Cape; together with Mr. Brand of the Free State as *amicus curiæ*, should he be willing to lend his good offices in the spirit in which he has hitherto acted. The cabinet then considered fully the terms of the communication to be made to the Boers by Sir E. Wood. In this, which is matter of extreme urgency, they prescribe a time for the reply of the Boers not later than the 18th; renew the promise of amnesty; require the dispersion of the Boers to their own homes; and state the general outlines of the permanent arrangement which they would propose for the territory. . . . The cabinet believe that in requiring the dispersion of the Boers to their homes, they will have made the necessary provision for the vindication of your Majesty's authority, so as to open the way for considering terms of pacific settlement.

On March 22, under instructions from home, the general concluded an agreement for peace. The Boers made some preliminary requests to which the government declined to assent. Their proposal that the commission should be joint was rejected; its members were named exclusively by the crown. They agreed to withdraw from the Nek and disperse to their homes; we agreed not to occupy the Nek, and not to

[1] In a speech at Edinburgh (Sept. 1, 1884) Mr. Gladstone put the same argument:—'The people of the Transvaal, few in number, were in close and strong sympathy with their brethren in race, language, and religion. Throughout South Africa these men, partly British subjects and partly not, were as one man associated in feeling with the people of the Transvaal; and had we persisted in that dishonourable attempt, against all our own interests, to coerce the Transvaal as we attempted to coerce Afghanistan, we should have had the whole mass of the Dutch population at the Cape and throughout South Africa rising in arms against us.'

follow them up with troops, though General Roberts with a large force had sailed for the Cape on March 6. Then the political negotiation went forward. Would it have been wise, as the question was well put by the Duke of Argyll (not then a member of the government), 'to stop the negotiation for the sake of defeating a body of farmers who had succeeded under accidental circumstances and by great rashness on the part of our commanders, in gaining a victory over us?' This was the true point.

The parliamentary attack was severe. The galling argument was that government had conceded to three defeats what they had refused to ten times as many petitions, memorials, remonstrances; and we had given to men with arms in their hands what we refused to their peaceful prayers. A great lawyer in the House of Lords made the speech that is expected from a great lawyer who is also a conspicuous party leader; and ministers undoubtedly exposed an extent of surface that was not easy to defend, not because they had made a peace, but because they had failed to prevent the rising. High military authorities found a curious plea for going on, in the fact that this was our first contest with Europeans since the breech-loader came in, and it was desirable to give our troops confidence in the new-fashioned weapon. Reasons of a very different sort from this were needed to overthrow the case for peace. How could the miscarriage at Majuba, brought on by our own action, warrant us in drawing back from an engagement already deliberately proffered? Would not such a proceeding, asked Lord Kimberley, have been little short of an act of bad faith? Or were we, in Mr. Gladstone's language, to say to the Boers, 'Although we might have treated with you before these military miscarriages, we cannot do so now, until we offer up a certain number of victims in expiation of the blood that has been shed. Until that has been done, the very things which we believed before to be reasonable, which we were ready to discuss with you, we refuse to discuss now, and we must wait until Moloch has been appeased.' We had opened a door for negotiation; were we to close it again, because a handful of our forces had rashly seized a post they could not hold? The action of the Boers had been defensive of the *status quo*, for if we had established ourselves on Majuba, their camp at Laing's Nek would have been untenable. The minister protested in the face of the House of Commons that 'it would have been most unjust and cruel, it would have been cowardly and mean, if on account of these defensive operations we had refused to go forward with the negotiations which, before the first of these miscarriages had occurred, we had already declared that we were willing to promote and undertake.'[1]

The policy of the reversal of annexation is likely to remain

[1] July 25, 1881.

a topic of endless dispute.[1] As Sir Hercules Robinson put it in a letter to Lord Kimberley, written a week before Majuba (Feb. 21), no possible course was free from grave objection. If you determine, he said, to hold by the annexation of the Transvaal, the country would have to be conquered and held in subjection for many years by a large force. Free institutions and self-government under British rule would be an impossibility. The only palliative would be to dilute Dutch feeling by extensive English immigration, like that of 1820 to the Eastern Province. But that would take time, and need careful watching; and in the meantime the result of holding the Transvaal as a conquered colony would undoubtedly be to excite bitter hatred between the English and Dutch throughout the Free State and this colony, which would be a constant source of discomfort and danger. On the other hand, he believed that if they were, after a series of reverses and before any success, to yield all the Boers asked for, they would be so overbearing and quarrelsome that we should soon be at war with them again. On the whole, Sir Hercules was disposed to think—extraordinary as such a view must appear—that the best plan would be to re-establish the supremacy of our arms, and then let the malcontents go. He thought no middle course any longer practicable. Yet surely this course was open to all the objections. To hold on to annexation at any cost was intelligible. But to face all the cost and all the risks of a prolonged and a widely extended conflict, with the deliberate intention of allowing the enemy to have his own way after the conflict had been brought to an end, was not intelligible and was not defensible.

Some have argued that we ought to have brought up an overwhelming force, to demonstrate that we were able to beat them, before we made peace. Unfortunately demonstrations of this species easily turn into provocations, and talk of this kind mostly comes from those who believe, not that peace was made in the wrong way, but that a peace giving their country back to the Boers ought never to have been made at all, on any terms or in any way. This was not the point from which either cabinet or parliament started. The government had decided that annexation had been an error. The Boers had proposed inquiry. The government assented on condition that the Boers dispersed. Without waiting a reasonable time for a reply, our general was worsted in a rash and trivial attack.

[1] One of the most determined enemies of the government in 1881, ten years later, in a visit to South Africa, changed his mind. 'The Dutch sentiment in the Cape Colony,' wrote Lord Randolph Churchill, 'had been so exasperated by what it considered the unjust, faithless, and arbitrary policy pursued towards the free Dutchmen of the Transvaal by Frere, Shepstone, and Lanyon, that the final triumph of the British arms, mainly by brute force, would have permanently and hopelessly alienated it from Great Britain. . . . On the whole, I find myself free to confess, and without reluctance to admit, that the English escaped from a wretched and discreditable muddle, not without harm and damage, but perhaps in the best possible manner.'

Did this cancel our proffered bargain? The point was simple and unmistakable, though party heat at home, race passion in the colony, and our everlasting human proneness to mix up different questions, and to answer one point by arguments that belong to another, all combined to produce a confusion of mind that a certain school of partisans have traded upon ever since. Strange in mighty nations is moral cowardice, disguised as a Roman pride. All the more may we admire the moral courage of the minister. For moral courage may be needed even where aversion to bloodshed fortunately happens to coincide with high prudence and sound policy of state.

VI

The negotiations proceeded, if negotiation be the right word. The Boers disbanded, a powerful British force was encamped on the frontier, no Boer representative sat on the commission, and the terms of final agreement were in fact, as the Boers afterwards alleged, dictated and imposed. Mr. Gladstone watched with a closeness that, considering the tremendous load of Ireland, parliamentary procedure, and the incessant general business of a prime minister, is amazing. When the Boers were over-pressing, he warned them that it was only 'the unshorn strength' of the administration that enabled the English cabinet, rather to the surprise of the world, to spare them the sufferings of a war. 'We could not,' he said to Lord Kimberley, 'have carried our Transvaal policy, unless we had here a strong government, and we spent some, if not much of our strength in carrying it.' A convention was concluded at Pretoria in August, recognising the quasi-independence of the Transvaal, subject to the suzerainty of the Queen, and with certain specified reservations. The Pretoria convention of 1881 did not work smoothly. Transvaal affairs were discussed from time to time in the cabinet, and Mr. Chamberlain became the spokesman of the government on a business where he was destined many years after to make so conspicuous and irreparable a mark. The Boers again sent Kruger to London, and he made out a good enough case in the opinion of Lord Derby, then secretary of state, to justify a fresh arrangement. By the London convention of 1884, the Transvaal state was restored to its old title of the South African Republic; the assertion of suzerainty in the preamble of the old convention did not appear in the new one;[1] and

1 'I apprehend, whether you call it a Protectorate, or a Suzerainty, or the recognition of England as a Paramount Power, the fact is that a certain controlling power is retained when the state which exercises this suzerainty has a right to veto any negotiations into which the dependent state may enter with foreign powers. Whatever suzerainty meant in the Convention of Pretoria, the condition of things which it implied still remains; although the word is not actually employed, we have kept the substance. We have abstained from using the word because it was not capable of legal definition, and because it seemed to be a word which was likely to lead to misconception and

various other modifications were introduced—the most important of them in the light of later events, being a provision for white men to have full liberty to reside in any part of the republic, to trade in it, and to be liable to the same taxes only as those exacted from citizens of the republic.

Whether we look at the Sand River Convention in 1852 which conferred independence; or at Shepstone's proclamation in 1877 which took independence away; or at the convention of Pretoria in 1881, which in a qualified shape gave it back; or at the convention of London in 1884, which qualified the qualification over again, till independence, subject to two or three specified conditions, was restored,—we can but recall the caustic apologue of sage Selden in his table-talk on contracts. 'Lady Kent,' he says, 'articled with Sir Edward Herbert that he should come to her when she sent for him, and stay with her as long as she would have him; to which he set his hand. Then he articled with her that he should go away when he pleased, and stay away as long as he pleased; to which she set her hand. This is the epitome of all the contracts in the world, betwixt man and man, betwixt prince and subject.'

misunderstanding.'—*Lord Derby in the House of Lords*, March 17, 1884. I do not desire to multiply points of controversy, but the ill-starred raising of the ghost of suzerainty in 1897-9 calls for the twofold remark that the preamble was struck out by Lord Derby's own hand, and that alike when Lord Knutsford and Lord Ripon were at the colonial office, answers were given in the House of Commons practically admitting that no claim of suzerainty could be put forward.

CHAPTER IV

NEW PHASES OF THE IRISH REVOLUTION

(*1880–1882*)

The agitation of the Irish land league strikes at the roots of all contract, and therefore at the very foundations of modern society; but if we would effectually withstand it, we must cease to insist on maintaining the forms of free contract where the reality is impossible.—T. H. GREEN.[1]

ON the day in 1880 when Lord Beaconsfield was finally quitting the official house in Downing Street, one who had been the ablest and most zealous supporter of his policy in the press, called to bid him good-bye. The visitor talked gloomily of the national prospect; of difficulties with Austria, with Russia, with the Turk; of the confusions to come upon Europe from the doctrines of Midlothian. The fallen minister listened. Then looking at his friend, he uttered in deep tones a single word. '*Ireland!*' he said.

In a speech made in 1882 Mr. Gladstone put the case to the House of Commons :—

The government had to deal with a state of things in Ireland entirely different from any that had been known there for fifty years. . . . With a political revolution we have ample strength to cope. There is no reason why our cheeks should grow pale, or why our hearts should sink, at the idea of grappling with a political revolution. The strength of this country is tenfold what is required for such a purpose. But a social revolution is a very different matter. . . . The seat and source of the movement was not to be found during the time the government was in power. It is to be looked for in the foundation of the land league.[2]

Two years later he said at Edinburgh :—

I frankly admit I had had much upon my hands connected with the doings of the Beaconsfield government in almost every quarter of the world, and I did not know, no one knew, the severity of the crisis that was already swelling upon the horizon, and that shortly after rushed upon us like a flood.[3]

[1] *Works of T. H. Green*, iii. 382. [2] House of Commons, April 4, 1882.
[3] Edinburgh, Sept. 1, 1884.

So came upon them by degrees the predominance of Irish affairs and Irish activity in the parliament of 1880, which had been chosen without much reference to Ireland.

II

A social revolution with the land league for its organ in Ireland, and Mr. Parnell and his party for its organ in parliament, now, in Mr. Gladstone's words, rushed upon him and his government like a flood. The mind of the country was violently drawn from Dulcigno and Thessaly, from Batoum and Erzeroum, from the wild squalor of Macedonia and Armenia to squalor not less wild in Connaught and Munster, in Mayo, Galway, Sligo, Kerry. Agrarian agitation on the one hand, parliamentary violence on the other, were the two potent weapons by which the Irish revolutionary leader assailed the misrule of the British garrison as the agents of the British parliament in his country. This formidable movement slowly unmasked itself. The Irish government, represented by Mr. Forster in the cabinet, began by allowing the law conferring exceptional powers upon the executive to lapse. The main reason was want of time to pass a fresh Act. In view of the undoubted distress in some parts of Ireland, and of the harshness of certain evictions, the government further persuaded the House of Commons to pass a bill for compensating an evicted tenant on certain conditions, if the landlord turned him out of his holding. The bill was no easy dose either for the cabinet or its friends. Lord Lansdowne stirred much commotion by retiring from the government, and landowners and capitalists were full of consternation. At least one member of the cabinet was profoundly uneasy. It is impossible to read the letters of the Duke of Argyll to Mr. Gladstone on land, church establishment, the Zulu war, without wondering on what theory a cabinet was formed that included him, able and upright as he was, along with radicals like Mr. Chamberlain. Before the cabinet was six months old the duke was plucking Mr. Gladstone's sleeve with some vivacity at the Birmingham language on Irish land. Mr. Parnell in the committee stage abstained from supporting the measure, sixteen liberals voted against the third reading, and the House of Lords, in which nationalist Ireland had not a single representative, threw out the bill by a majority of 282 against 51. It was said that if all the opposition peers had stayed away, still ministers would have been beaten by their own supporters.

Looking back upon these events, Mr. Gladstone set out in a memorandum of later years, that during the session of 1880 the details of the budget gave him a good deal to do, while the absorbing nature of foreign questions before and after his

accession to office had withdrawn his attention from his own Land Act of 1870[1]:—

Late in the session came the decisive and disastrous rejection by the House of Lords of the bill by means of which the government had hoped to arrest the progress of disorder, and avert the necessity for measures in the direction of coercion. The rapid and vast extension of agrarian disturbance followed, as was to be expected, this wild excess of landlordism, and the Irish government proceeded to warn the cabinet that coercive legislation would be necessary.

Forster allowed himself to be persuaded by the governmental agents in Ireland that the root of the evil lay within small compass; that there were in the several parishes a certain limited number of unreasonable and mischievous men, that these men were known to the police, and that if summary powers were confided to the Irish government, by the exercise of which these objectionable persons might be removed, the evil would die out of itself. I must say I never fell into this extraordinary illusion of Forster's about his 'village ruffian.' But he was a very impracticable man placed in a position of great responsibility. He was set upon a method of legislation adapted to the erroneous belief that the mischief lay only with a very limited number of well-known individuals, that is to say, the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. . . . Two points of difference arose: first, as to the nature of the coercion to be used; secondly, as to its time. I insisted that we were bound to try what we could do against Parnell under the existing law, before asking for extraordinary powers. Both Bright and Chamberlain, if I remember right, did very good service in protesting against haste, and resisting Forster's desire to anticipate the ordinary session for the purpose of obtaining coercive powers. When, however, the argument of time was exhausted by the Parnell trial[2] and otherwise, I obtained no support from them in regard to the kind of coercion we were to ask. I considered it should be done by giving stringency to the existing law, but not by abolishing the right to be tried before being imprisoned. I felt the pulse of various members of the cabinet, among whom I seem to recollect Kimberley and Carlingford, but I could obtain no sympathy, and to my dismay both Chamberlain and Bright arrived at the conclusion that if there was to be coercion at all, which they lamented, there was something simple and effective in the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act which made such a method preferable to others.[3] I finally acquiesced. It may be asked why? My resistance would have broken up the government or involved my own retirement. My reason for acquiescence was that I bore in mind the special commission under which the government had taken office. It related to the foreign policy of the country, the whole spirit and effect of which we were to reconstruct. This work had not yet been fully accomplished, and it seemed to me that the effective prosecution of it was our first and highest duty. I therefore submitted.

By the end of November Mr. Gladstone explained to the Queen that the state of Ireland was menacing; its distinctive

[1] See vol. i. book vi. chap. ii.

[2] Proceedings had been instituted in the Dublin courts against Parnell and others for seditious conspiracy. The jury were unable to agree on a verdict.

[3] Tried by Lord Spencer in Westmeath in 1871, it had been successful, but the area of disturbance was there comparatively insignificant.

character was not so much that of general insecurity of life, as that of a widespread conspiracy against property. The worst of it was, he said, that the leaders, unlike O'Connell, failed to denounce crime. The outbreak was not comparable to that of 1832. In 1879 homicides were 64 against 242 for the earlier year of disturbance. But things were bad enough. In Galway they had a policeman for every forty-seven adult males, and a soldier for every ninety-seven. Yet dangerous terrorism was rampant. 'During more than thirty-seven years since I first entered a cabinet,' Mr. Gladstone told the Speaker (November 25), 'I have hardly known so difficult a question of administration, as that of the immediate duty of the government in the present state of Ireland. The multitude of circumstances to be taken into account must strike every observer. Among these stand the novelty of the suspension of Habeas Corpus in a case of agrarian crime stimulated by a public society, and the rather serious difficulty of obtaining it; but more important than these is the grave doubt whether it would really reach the great characteristic evil of the time, namely, the paralysis of most important civil and proprietary rights, and whether the immediate proposal of a remedy, probably ineffective and even in a coercive sense partial, would not seriously damage the prospects of that arduous and comprehensive task which without doubt we must undertake when parliament is summoned.' In view of considerations of this kind, the awkwardness of directing an Act of parliament virtually against leaders who were at the moment the object of indictment in the Irish law courts; difficulties of time; doubts as to the case being really made out; doubts as to the efficacy of the proposed remedy, Mr. Forster did not carry the cabinet, but agreed to continue the experiment of the ordinary law. The experiment was no success, and coercion accompanied by land reform became the urgent policy.

III

The opening of the session of 1881 at once brought obstruction into full view. The Irish took up their position as a party of action. They spoke incessantly; as Mr. Gladstone put it, 'sometimes rising to the level of mediocrity, and more often grovelling amidst mere trash in unbounded profusion.' Obstruction is obstruction all the world over. It was not quite new at Westminster, but it was new on this scale. Closure proposals sprang up like mushrooms. Liberal members with a historical bent ran privately to the Speaker with ancient precedents of dictatorial powers asserted by his official ancestors, and they exhorted him to revive them.

Mr. Forster brought in his bill. Its scope may be described in a sentence. It practically enabled the viceroy to lock up anybody he pleased, and to detain him as long as he pleased

while the Act remained in force.[1] The debate for leave to introduce the bill lasted several days, without any sign of coming to an end. Here is the Speaker's account of his own memorable act in forcing a close :—

Monday, Jan. 31—The House was boiling over with indignation at the apparent triumph of obstruction, and Mr. G. yielding to the pressure of his friends, committed himself, unwisely as I thought, to a continuous sitting on this day in order to force the bill through its first stage.

On Tuesday, after a sitting of twenty-four hours, I saw plainly that this attempt to carry the bill by continuous sitting would fail, the Parnell party being strong in numbers, discipline, and organization, and with great gifts of speech. I reflected on the situation, and came to the conclusion that it was my duty to extricate the House from the difficulty by closing the debate of my own authority, and so asserting the undoubted will of the House against a rebellious minority. I sent for Mr. G. on Tuesday (Feb 1.), about noon, and told him that I should be prepared to put the question in spite of obstruction on the following conditions :— 1. That the debate should be carried on until the following morning, my object in this delay being to mark distinctly to the outside world the extreme gravity of the situation, and the necessity of the step which I was about to take. 2. That he should reconsider the regulation of business, either by giving more authority to the House, or by conferring authority on the Speaker.

He agreed to these conditions, and summoned a meeting of the cabinet, which assembled in my library at 4 P.M. on Tuesday while the House was sitting, and I was in the chair. At that meeting the resolution as to business assumed the shape in which it finally appeared on the following Thursday, it having been previously considered at former meetings of the cabinet. I arranged with Playfair to take the chair on Tuesday night about midnight, engaging to resume it on Wednesday morning at nine. Accordingly at nine I took the chair, Biggar being in possession of the House. I rose, and he resumed his seat. I proceeded with my address as concerted with May, and when I had concluded I put the question. The scene was most dramatic ; but all passed off without disturbance, the Irish party on the second division retiring under protest.

I had communicated, with Mr. G.'s approval, my intention to close the debate to Northcote, but to no one else, except May, from whom I received much assistance. Northcote was startled, but expressed no disapproval of the course proposed.

So ended the memorable sitting of January 31. At noon, on February 2, the House assembled in much excitement. The question was put challenging the Speaker's conduct. 'I answered,' he says, 'on the spur of the moment that I had acted on my own responsibility, and from a sense of duty to the House. I never heard such loud and protracted cheering, none cheering more loudly than Gladstone.' 'The Speaker's firmness in mind,' Mr. Gladstone reported to the Queen, 'his suavity in manner, his unwearied patience, his incomparable temper, under a thousand provocations, have rendered possible a really important result.'

[1] For a plain and precise description of the Coercion Act of 1881, see Dicey's *Law of the Constitution*, pp. 243-8.

IV

After coercion came a land bill, and here Mr. Gladstone once more displayed his unequalled mastery of legislative skill and power. He had to explain and be ready to explain again and again, what he told Lord Selborne was 'the most difficult measure he had ever known to come under the detailed consideration of a cabinet.' It was no affair this time of speeches out of a railway carriage, or addressed to excited multitudes in vast halls. That might be, if you so pleased, 'the empty verbosity of exuberant rhetoric'; but nobody could say that of the contest over the complexities of Irish tenure, against the clever and indomitable Irish experts who fought under the banner of Mr. Parnell. Northcote was not far wrong when he said that though the bill was carried by two to one, there was hardly a man in the House beyond the Irish ranks who cared a straw about it. Another critic said that if the prime minister had asked the House to pass the *Koran* or the *Nautical Almanac* as a land bill, he would have met no difficulty.

The history of the session was described as the carriage of a single measure by a single man. Few British members understood it, none mastered it. The whigs were disaffected about it, the radicals doubted it, the tories thought that property as a principle was ruined by it, the Irishmen, when the humour seized them, bade him send the bill to line trunks. Mr. Gladstone, as one observer truly says, 'faced difficulties such as no other bill of this country has ever encountered, difficulties of politics and difficulties of law, difficulties of principle and difficulties of detail, difficulties of party and difficulties of personnel, difficulties of race and difficulties of class, and he has never once failed, or even seemed to fail, in his clear command of the question, in his dignity and authority of demeanour, in his impartiality in accepting amended suggestions, in his firmness in resisting destructive suggestions, in his clear perception of his aim, and his strong grasp of the fitting means. And yet it is hardly possible to appreciate adequately the embarrassments of the situation.'

Enough has already been said of the legislation of 1870, and its establishment of the principle that Irish land is not the subject of an undivided ownership, but a partnership.[1] The act of 1870 failed because it had too many exceptions and limitations; because in administration the compensation to the tenant for disturbance was inadequate; and because it did not fix the cultivator in his holding. Things had now ripened. The Richmond Commission shortly before had pointed to a court for fixing rents; that is, for settling the terms of the partnership. A commission nominated by Mr. Gladstone and presided over by Lord Bessborough, had reported early in 1881 in favour

[1] See vol. i. p. 688.

not only of fair rents to be settled by a tribunal, but of fixity of tenure or the right of the tenant to remain in his holding if he paid his rent, and of free sale ; that is, his right to part with his interest. These 'three F's' were the substance of the legislation of 1881.

Rents could not be paid, and landlords either would not or could not reduce them. In the deepest interests of social order, and in confirmation of the tenant's equitable and customary ownership, the only course open to the imperial legislature was to erect machinery for fixing fair rents. The alternative to what became matter of much objurgation as dual ownership, was a single ownership that was only a short name for allowing the landlord to deal as he liked with the equitable interest of the tenant. Without the machinery set up by Mr. Gladstone, there could be no security for the protection of the cultivator's interest. What is more, even in view of a wide and general extension of the policy of buying out the landlord and turning the tenant into single owner, still a process of valuation for purposes of fair price would have been just as indispensable, as under the existing system was the tiresome and costly process of valuation for purposes of fair rent. It is true that if the policy of purchase had been adopted, this process would have been performed once for all. But opinion was not nearly ready either in England or Ireland for general purchase. And as Mr. Gladstone had put it to Bright in 1870, to turn a little handful of occupiers into owners would not have touched the fringe of the case of the bulk of the Irish cultivators, then undergoing acute mischief and urgently crying for prompt relief. Mr. Bright's idea of purchase, moreover, assumed that the buyer would come with at least a quarter of the price in his hand,—an assumption not consistent with the practical possibilities of the case.

The legislation of 1881 no doubt encountered angry criticism from the English conservative, and little more than frigid approval from the Irish nationalist. It offended the fundamental principle of the landlords ; its administration and the construction of some of its leading provisions by the courts disappointed and irritated the tenant party. Nevertheless any attempt in later times to impair the authority of the Land Act of 1881 brought the fact instantly to light, that the tenant knew it to be the fundamental charter of his redemption from worse than Egyptian bondage. In measuring this great agrarian law, not only by parliamentary force and legislative skill and power, but by the vast and abiding depth of its social results, both direct and still more indirect, many will be disposed to give it the highest place among Mr. Gladstone's achievements as lawmaker.

Fault has sometimes been found with Mr. Gladstone for not introducing his bill in the session of 1880. If this had been done, it is argued, Ireland would have been appeased, no

coercion would have been necessary, and we should have been spared disastrous parliamentary exasperations and all the other mischiefs and perils of the quarrel between England and Ireland that followed. Criticism of this kind overlooks three facts. Neither Mr. Gladstone nor Forster nor the new House of Commons was at all ready in 1880 to accept the Three F's. Second, the Bessborough commission had not taken its evidence, and made its momentous report. Third, this argument assumes motives in Mr. Parnell, that probably do not at all cover the whole ground of his policy. As it happened, I called on Mr. Gladstone one morning early in 1881, 'You have heard,' I asked, 'that the Bessborough commission are to report for the Three F's?' 'I have not heard,' he said, 'it is incredible!' As so often comes to pass in politics, it was only a step from the incredible to the indispensable. But in 1880 the indispensable was also the impossible. It was the cruel winter of 1880-1 that made much difference.

In point of endurance the session was one of the most remarkable on record. The House of Commons sat 154 days and for 1400 hours; some 240 of these hours were after midnight. Only three times since the Reform bill had the House sat for more days; only once, in 1847, had the total number of hours been exceeded and that only by seven, and never before had the House sat so many hours after midnight. On the Coercion bill the House sat continuously once for 22 hours, and once for 41. The debates on the Land bill took up 58 sittings, and the Coercion bill 22. No such length of discussion, Mr. Gladstone told the Queen, was recorded on any measure since the committee on the first Reform Bill. The Reform bill of 1867 was the only measure since 1843 that took as many as 35 days of debate. The Irish Church bill took 21 days and the Land bill of 1870 took 25. Of the 14,836 speeches delivered, 6315 were made by Irish members. The Speaker and chairman of committees interposed on points of order nearly 2000 times during the session. Mr. Parnell, the Speaker notes, 'with his minority of 24 dominates the House. When will the House take courage and reform its procedure?' After all, the suspension of *habeas corpus* is a thing that men may well think it worth while to fight about, and a revolution in a country's land-system might be expected to take up a good deal of time.

V

It soon appeared that no miracle had been wrought by either Coercion Act or Land Act. Mr. Parnell drew up test cases for submission to the new land court. His advice to the army of tenants would depend, he said, on the fate of these cases. In September Mr. Forster visited Hawarden, and gave a bad account of the real meaning of Mr. Parnell's plausible propositions for sending test cases to the newly established land

commission, as well as of other ugly circumstances. 'It is quite clear as you said,' wrote Mr. Gladstone to Forster in Ireland, 'that Parnell means to present cases which the commission must refuse, and then to treat their refusal as showing that they cannot be trusted, and that the bill has failed.' As he interpreted it afterwards, there was no doubt that in one sense the Land Act tended to accelerate a crisis in Ireland, for it brought to a head the affairs of the party connected with the land league. It made it almost a necessity for that party either to advance or to recede. They chose the desperate course. At the same date, he wrote in a letter to Lord Granville :—

With respect to Parnellism, I should not propose to do more than a severe and strong denunciation of it by severing him altogether from the Irish people and the mass of the Irish members, and by saying that home rule has for one of its aims local government—an excellent thing to which I would affix no limits except the supremacy of the imperial parliament, and the right of all parts of the country to claim whatever might be accorded to Ireland. This is only a repetition of what I have often said before, and I have nothing to add or enlarge. But I have the fear that when the occasion for action comes, which will not be in my time, many liberals may perhaps hang back and may cause further trouble.

In view of what was to come four years later, one of his letters to Forster is interesting (April 12, 1882), among other reasons as illustrating the depth to which the essence of political liberalism had now penetrated Mr. Gladstone's mind :—

1. About local government for Ireland, the ideas which more and more establish themselves in my mind are such as these.

(1.) Until we have seriously responsible bodies to deal with us in Ireland, every plan we frame comes to Irishmen, say what we may, as an English plan. As such it is probably condemned. At best it is a one-sided bargain, which binds us, not them.

(2.) If your excellent plans for obtaining local aid towards the execution of the law break down, it will be on account of this miserable and almost total want of the sense of responsibility for the public good and public peace in Ireland ; and this responsibility we cannot create except through local self-government.

(3.) If we say we must postpone the question till the state of the country is more fit for it, I should answer that the least danger is in going forward at once. It is liberty alone which fits men for liberty. This proposition, like every other in politics, has its bounds ; but it is far safer than the counter doctrine, wait till they are fit.

(4.) In truth I should say (differing perhaps from many), that for the Ireland of to-day, the first question is the rectification of the relations between landlord and tenant, which happily is going on ; the next is to relieve Great Britain from the enormous weight of the government of Ireland unaided by the people, and from the hopeless contradiction in which we stand while we give a parliamentary representation, hardly effective for anything but mischief without the local institutions of self-govern-

ment which it presupposes, and on which alone it can have a sound and healthy basis.

We have before us in administration, he wrote to Forster in September—

a problem not less delicate and arduous than the problem of legislation with which we have lately had to deal in parliament. Of the leaders, the officials, the skeleton of the land league I have no hope whatever. The better the prospects of the Land Act with their adherents outside the circle of wire-pullers, and with the Irish people, the more bitter will be their hatred, and the more sure they will be to go as far as fear of the people will allow them in keeping up the agitation, which they cannot afford to part with on account of their ulterior ends. All we can do is to turn more and more the masses of their followers, to fine them down by good laws and good government, and it is in this view that the question of judicious releases from prison, should improving statistics of crime encourage it, may become one of early importance.

VI

It was in the autumn of 1881 that Mr. Gladstone visited Leeds, in payment of the debt of gratitude due for his triumphant return in the general election of the year before. This progress extended over four days, and almost surpassed in magnitude and fervour any of his experiences in other parts of the kingdom. We have an interesting glimpse of the physical effort of such experiences in a couple of his letters written to Mr. Kitson, who with immense labour and spirit had organized this severe if glorious enterprise :—

Hawarden Castle, Sept. 28, 1881.—I thank you for the very clear and careful account of the proposed proceedings at Leeds. It lacks as yet that *rough* statement of numbers at each meeting, which is requisite to enable me to understand what I shall have to do. This will be fixed by the scale of the meeting. I see no difficulty but one—a procession through the principal thoroughfares is one of the most exhausting processes I know as a *preliminary* to addressing a mass meeting. A mass meeting requires the physical powers to be in their best and freshest state, as far as anything can be fresh in a man near seventy-two ; and I have on one or more former occasions felt them wofully contracted. In Midlothian I never had anything of the kind before a great physical effort in speaking : and the lapse even of a couple of years is something. It would certainly be most desirable to have the mass meeting first, and then I have not any fear at all of the procession through whatever thoroughfares you think fit.

Oct. 2, 1881.—I should be very sorry to put aside any of the opportunities of vision at Leeds which the public may care to use ; but what I had hoped was that these might come *after* any speeches of considerable effort and not *before* them. To understand what a physical drain, and what a reaction from tension of the senses is caused by a 'progress' before addressing a great audience, a person must probably have gone through it, and gone through it at my time of life. When I went to Midlothian, I begged that this might never happen ; and it was avoided throughout. Since that time I have myself been sensible for the first

time of a diminished power of voice in the House of Commons, and others also for the first time have remarked it.

Vast torchlight processions, addresses from the corporation, four score addresses from political bodies, a giant banquet in the Cloth Hall Yard covered in for the purpose, on one day; on another, more addresses, a public luncheon followed by a mass meeting of over five-and-twenty thousand persons, then a long journey through dense throngs vociferous with an exultation that knew no limits, a large dinner party, and at the end of all a night train. The only concessions that the veteran asked to weakness of the flesh, were that at the banquet he should not appear until the eating and drinking were over, and that at the mass meeting some preliminary speakers should intervene to give him time to take breath after his long and serious exercises of the morning. When the time came his voice was heard like the note of a clear and deep-toned bell. So much had vital energy, hardly less rare than his mental power, to do with the varied exploits of this spacious career.

The topics of his Leeds speeches I need not travel over. What attracted most attention and perhaps drew most applause was his warning to Mr. Parnell. 'He desires,' said the minister, 'to arrest the operation of the Land Act; to stand as Moses stood between the living and the dead; to stand there not as Moses stood, to arrest, but to spread the plague.' The menace that followed became a catchword of the day: 'If it shall appear that there is still to be fought a final conflict in Ireland between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness upon the other, if the law purged from defect and from any taint of injustice is still to be repelled and refused, and the first conditions of political society to remain unfulfilled, then I say, gentlemen, without hesitation, the resources of civilisation against its enemies are not yet exhausted.'[1]

Nor was the pageant all excitement. The long speech, which by way of prelusion to the great mass meeting he addressed to the chamber of commerce, was devoted to the destruction of the economic sophisters who tried to persuade us that 'the vampire of free-trade was insidiously sucking the life-blood of the country.' In large survey of broad social facts, exposition of diligently assorted figures, power of scientific analysis, sustained chain of reasoning, he was never better. The consummate mastery of this argumentative performance did not slay a heresy that has nine lives, but it drove the thing out of sight in Yorkshire for some time to come.[2]

VII

On Wednesday October 12, the cabinet met, and after five hours of deliberation decided that Mr. Parnell should be sent to

[1] At the Cloth Hall banquet, Leeds, Oct. 8, 1881.

[2] Speech to the Leeds Chamber of Commerce, Oct. 8, 1881.

prison under the Coercion Act. The Irish leader was arrested at his hotel the next morning, and carried off to Kilmainham, where he remained for some six months. The same day Mr. Gladstone was presented with an address from the Common Council of London, and in his speech at the Guildhall gave them the news :—

Our determination has been that to the best of our power, our words should be carried into acts [referring to what he had said at Leeds], and even within these few moments I have been informed that towards the vindication of law and order, of the rights of property, of the freedom of the land, of the first elements of political life and civilisation, the first step has been taken in the arrest of the man who unhappily from motives which I do not challenge, which I cannot examine and with which I have nothing to do, has made himself beyond all others prominent in the attempt to destroy the authority of the law, and to substitute what would end in being nothing more or less than anarchical oppression exercised upon the people of Ireland.

The arrest of Mr. Parnell was no doubt a pretty considerable strain upon powers conferred by parliament to put down village ruffians ; but times were revolutionary, and though the Act of parliament was not a wise one, but altogether the reverse of wise, it was no wonder that having got the instrument, ministers thought they might as well use it. Still executive violence did not seem to work, and Mr. Gladstone looked in a natural direction for help in the milder way of persuasion. He wrote (December 17th) to Cardinal Newman :—

I will begin with defining strictly the limits of this appeal. I ask you to read the inclosed papers ; and to consider whether you will write anything to Rome upon them. I do not ask you to write, nor to tell me whether you write, nor to make any reply to this letter, beyond returning the inclosures in an envelope to me in Downing Street. I will state briefly the grounds of my request, thus limited. In 1844, when I was young as a cabinet minister, and the government of Sir R. Peel was troubled with the O'Connell manifestations, they made what I think was an appeal to Pope Gregory XVI. for his intervention to discourage agitation in Ireland. I should be very loath now to tender such a request at Rome. But now a different case arises. Some members of the Roman catholic priesthood in Ireland deliver certain sermons and otherwise express themselves in the way which my inclosures exhibit. I doubt whether if they were laymen we should not have settled their cases by putting them into gaol. I need not describe the sentiments uttered. Your eminence will feel them and judge them as strongly as I do. But now as to the Supreme Pontiff. You will hardly be surprised when I say that I regard him, if apprised of the facts, as responsible for the conduct of these priests. For I know perfectly well that he has the means of silencing them ; and that, if any one of them were in public to dispute the decrees of the council of 1870 as plainly as he has denounced law and order, he would be silenced.

Mr. Errington, who is at Rome, will I believe have seen these papers, and will I hope have brought the facts as far as he is able to the knowledge of his holiness. But I do not know how far he is able ; nor how he

may use his discretion. He is not our official servant, but an independent Roman catholic gentleman and a volunteer.

My wish is as regards Ireland, in this hour of her peril and her hope, to leave nothing undone by which to give heart and strength to the hope and to abate the peril. But my wish as regards the Pope is that he should have the means of bringing those for whom he is responsible to fulfil the elementary duties of citizenship. I say of citizenship; of Christianity, of priesthood, it is not for me to speak.

The cardinal replied that he would gladly find himself able to be of service, however slight it might be, in a political crisis, which must be felt as of grave anxiety by all who understand the blessing of national unity and peace. He thought Mr. Gladstone overrated the pope's power in political and social matters. Absolute in questions of theology, it was not so in political matters. If the contest in Ireland were whether 'rebellion,' or whether 'robbery' was a sin, we might expect him to anathematize its denial. But his action in concrete matters, as whether a political party is censurable or not, was not direct, and only in the long run effective. Local power and influence was often a match for Roman right. The pope's right keeps things together, it checks extravagances, and at length prevails, but not without a fight. Its exercise is a matter of great prudence, and depends upon times and circumstances. As for the intemperate dangerous words of priests and curates, surely such persons belonged to their respective bishops, and scarcely required the introduction of the Supreme Authority.

VIII

We have now arrived at April 1882. The reports brought to the cabinet by Mr. Forster were of the gloomiest. The Land Act had brought no improvement. In the south-west and many of the midland counties lawlessness and intimidation were worse than ever. Returns of agrarian crime were presented in every shape, and comparisons framed by weeks, by months, by quarters; do what the statisticians would, and in spite of fluctuations, murders and other serious outrages had increased. The policy of arbitrary arrest had completely failed, and the officials and crown lawyers at the Castle were at their wits' end.

While the cabinet was face to face with this ugly prospect, Mr. Gladstone received a communication volunteered by an Irish member, as to the new attitude of Mr. Parnell and the possibility of turning it to good account. Mr. Gladstone sent this letter on to Forster, replying meanwhile 'in the sense of not shutting the door.' When the thing came before the cabinet, Mr. Chamberlain—who had previously told Mr. Gladstone that he thought the time opportune for something like a reconciliation with the Irish party—with characteristic courage took his life in his hands, as he put it, and set to work to ascer-

tain through the emissary what use for the public good could be made of Mr. Parnell's changed frame of mind. On April 25th, the cabinet heard what Mr. Chamberlain had to tell them, and it came to this, that Mr. Parnell was desirous to use his influence on behalf of peace, but his influence for good depended on the settlement of the question of arrears. Ministers decided that they could enter into no agreement and would give no pledge. They would act on their own responsibility in the light of the knowledge they had gained of Mr. Parnell's views. Mr. Gladstone was always impatient of any reference to 'reciprocal assurances' or 'tacit understanding' in respect of the dealings with the prisoner in Kilmainham. Still the nature of the proceedings was plain enough. The object of the communications to which the government were invited by Mr. Parnell through his emissary, was, supposing him to be anxious to do what he could for law and order, to find out what action on the part of the government would enable him to adopt this line.

Events then moved rapidly. Rumours that something was going on got abroad, and questions began to be put in parliament. A stout tory gave notice of a motion aiming at the release of the suspects. As Mr. Gladstone informed the Queen, there was no doubt that the general opinion of the public was moving in a direction adverse to arbitrary imprisonment, though the question was a nice one for consideration whether the recent surrender by the no-rent party of its extreme and most subversive contentions, amounted to anything like a guarantee for their future conduct in respect of peace and order. The rising excitement was swelled by the retirement of Lord Cowper from the viceroyalty, and the appointment as his successor of Lord Spencer, who had filled that post in Mr. Gladstone's first government. On May 2nd, Mr. Gladstone read a memorandum to the cabinet to which they agreed:—

> The cabinet are of opinion that the time has now arrived when with a view to the interests of law and order in Ireland, the three members of parliament who have been imprisoned on suspicion since last October, should be immediately released; and that the list of suspects should be examined with a view to the release of all persons not believed to be associated with crimes. They propose at once to announce to parliament their intention to propose, as soon as necessary business will permit, a bill to strengthen the ordinary law in Ireland for the security of life and property, while reserving their discretion with regard to the Life and Property Protection Act [of 1881], which however they do not at present think it will be possible to renew, if a favourable state of affairs shall prevail in Ireland.

From this proceeding Mr. Forster dissented, and he resigned his office. His point seems to have been that no suspect should be released until the new Coercion Act had been fashioned,

whereas the rest of the cabinet held that there was no excuse for the continued detention under arbitrary warrant of men as to whom the ground for the 'reasonable suspicion' required by the law had now disappeared. He probably felt that the appointment of a viceroy of cabinet rank and with successful Irish experience was in fact his own supersession. 'I have received your letter,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to him (May 2), 'with much grief, but on this it would be selfish to expatiate. I have no choice; followed or not followed I must go on. There are portions of the subject which touch you personally, and which seem to me to deserve *much* attention. But I have such an interest in the main issue, that I could not be deemed impartial; so I had better not enter on them. One thing, however, I wish to say. You wish to minimise in any further statement the cause of your retreat. In my opinion—*and I speak from experience*—viewing the nature of that cause, you will find this hardly possible. For a justification you, I fear, will have to found upon the doctrine of "a new departure." We must protest against it, and deny it with heart and soul.'

The way in which Mr. Gladstone chose to put things was stated in a letter to the Queen (May 3):—'In his judgment there had been two, and only two, vital powers of commanding efficacy in Ireland, the Land Act, and the land league; they had been locked in a combat of life and death; and the cardinal question was which of the two would win. From the serious effort to amend the Land Act by the Arrears bill of the nationalists,[1] from the speeches made in support of it, and from information voluntarily tendered to the government as to the views of the leaders of the league, the cabinet believed that those who governed the land league were now conscious of having been defeated by the Land Act on the main question, that of paying rent.'

For the office of Irish secretary Mr. Gladstone selected Lord Frederick Cavendish, who was the husband of a niece of Mrs. Gladstone's, and one of the most devoted of his friends and adherents. The special reason for the choice of this capable and high-minded man, was that Lord Frederick had framed a plan of finance at the treasury for a new scheme of land purchase. The two freshly appointed Irish ministers at once crossed over to a country seething in disorder. The afternoon of the fatal sixth of May was passed by the new viceroy and Lord Frederick in that grim apartment in Dublin Castle, where successive secretaries spend unshining hours in saying No to impossible demands, and hunting for plausible answers to insoluble riddles. Never did so dreadful a shadow overhang it as on that day. The task on which the two ministers were engaged was the consideration of the new provisions for coping with disorder, which had been prepared in London. The

[1] Introduced by Mr. Redmond.

under-secretary, Mr. Burke, and one of the lawyers, were present. Lord Spencer rode out to the park about five o'clock, and Lord Frederick followed him an hour later. He was overtaken by the under-secretary walking homewards, and as the two strolled on together, they were both brutally murdered in front of the vice-regal residence. The assassins did not know who Lord Frederick was. Well has it been said that Ireland seems the sport of a destiny that is aimless.[1]

The official world of London was on that Saturday night in the full round of its pleasures. The Gladstones were dining at the Austrian embassy. So too, was Sir William Harcourt, and to him as home secretary the black tidings were sent from Dublin late in the evening. Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone had already left, she for a party at the admiralty, he walking home to Downing Street. At the admiralty they told her of bad news from Ireland and hurried her away. Mr. Gladstone arrived at home a few minutes after her. When his secretary in the hall told him of the horrible thing that had been done, it was as if he had been felled to the ground. Then they hastened to bear what solace they could, to the anguish-stricken home where solace would be so sorely needed.

The effect of this blind and hideous crime was at once to arrest the spirit and the policy of conciliation. While the Irish leaders were locked up, a secret murder club had taken matters in hand in their own way, and ripened plots within a stone's throw of the Castle. No worse blow could have been struck at Mr. Parnell's policy. It has been said that the nineteenth century had seen the course of its history twenty-five times diverted by actual or attempted crime. In that sinister list the murders in the Phœnix Park have a tragic place.

The voice of party was for the moment hushed. Sir Stafford Northcote wrote a letter of admirable feeling, saying that if there was any way in which Mr. Gladstone thought they could serve the government, he would of course let them know. The Prince of Wales wrote of his own horror and indignation at the crime, and of his sympathy with Mr. Gladstone in the loss of one who was not only a colleague of many merits, but a near connection and devoted friend. With one or two scandalous exceptions, the tone of the English press was sober, sensible, and self-possessed. 'If a nation,' said a leading journal in Paris, 'should be judged by the way in which it acts on grave occasions, the spectacle offered by England is calculated to produce a high opinion of the political character and spirit of the British people.' Things of the baser sort were not quite absent, but they did not matter. An appeal confronted the

[1] It had been Mr. Burke's practice to drive from the Castle to the Park gate, then to descend and walk home, followed by two detectives. On this occasion he found at the gate that the chief secretary had passed, and drove forward to overtake him. The detectives did not follow him as usual. If they had followed, he would have been saved.

electors of the North-West Riding as they went to the poll at a bye-election a few days later, to 'Vote for ——, and avenge the death of Lord Frederick Cavendish!' They responded by placing ——'s opponent at the head of the poll by a majority of two thousand.

The scene in the House had all the air of tragedy, and Mr. Gladstone summoned courage enough to do his part with impressive composure. A colleague was doing some business with him in his room before the solemnity began. When it was over, they resumed it, Mr. Gladstone making no word of reference to the sombre interlude, before or after. 'Went reluctantly to the House,' he says in his diary, 'and by the help of God forced out what was needful on the question of the adjournment.' His words were not many, when after commemorating the marked qualities of Mr. Burke, he went on in laboured tones and slow speech and hardly repressed emotion :—

The hand of the assassin has come nearer home ; and though I feel it difficult to say a word, yet I must say that one of the very noblest hearts in England has ceased to beat, and has ceased at the very moment when it was just devoted to the service of Ireland, full of love for that country, full of hope for her future, full of capacity to render her service.

Writing to Lady Frederick on a later day, he mentions a public reference to some pathetic words of hers (May 19) :—

Sexton just now returned to the subject, with much approval from the House. You will find it near the middle of a long speech. Nothing could be better either in feeling or in grace (the man is little short of a master), and I think it will warm your heart. You have made a mark deeper than any wound.

To Lord Ripon in India, he wrote (June 1) :—

The black act brought indeed a great personal grief to my wife and me ; but we are bound to merge our own sorrow in the larger and deeper affliction of the widow and the father, in the sense of the public loss of a life so valuable to the nation, and in the consideration of the great and varied effects it may have on immediate and vital interests. Since the death of this dearly loved son, we have heard much good of the Duke, whom indeed we saw at Chatsworth after the funeral, and we have seen much of Lady Frederick, who has been good even beyond what we could have hoped. I have no doubt you have heard in India the echo of words spoken by Spencer from a letter of hers, in which she said she could give up even him if his death were to work good to his fellow-men, which indeed was the whole object of his life. These words have had a tender effect, as remarkable as the horror excited by the slaughter. Spencer wrote to me that a priest in Connemara read them from the altar ; when the whole congregation spontaneously fell down upon their knees. In England, the national attitude has been admirable. The general strain of language has been, 'Do not let this terrible and flagitious crime deter you from persevering with the work of justice.'

Well did Dean Church say that no Roman or Florentine lady ever uttered a more heroic thing than was said by this English lady when on first seeing Mr. Gladstone that terrible midnight she said, 'You did right to send him to Ireland.'[1] 'The loss of F. Cavendish,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to his eldest son, 'will ever be to us all as an unhealed wound.'

On the day after the murders Mr. Gladstone received a note through the same channel by which Mr. Chamberlain had carried on his communications: — 'I am authorised by Mr. Parnell to state that if Mr. Gladstone considers it necessary for the maintenance of his [Mr. G.'s] position and for carrying out his views, that Mr. Parnell should resign his seat, Mr. Parnell is prepared to do so immediately.' To this Mr. Gladstone replied (May 7):—

> My duty does not permit me for a moment to entertain Mr. Parnell's proposal, just conveyed to me by you, that he should if I think it needful resign his seat; but I am deeply sensible of the honourable motives by which it has been prompted.

'My opinion is,' said Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, 'that if Parnell goes, no restraining influence will remain; the scale of outrages will be again enlarged; and no repressive bill can avail to put it down.' Those of the cabinet who had the best chance of knowing, were convinced that Mr. Parnell was 'sincerely anxious for the pacification of Ireland.'

The reaction produced by the murders in the Park made perseverance in a milder policy impossible in face of English opinion, and parliament eagerly passed the Coercion Act of 1882. I once asked an Irishman of consummate experience and equitable mind, with no leanings that I know of to political nationalism, whether the task of any later ruler of Ireland was comparable to Lord Spencer's. 'Assuredly not,' he replied; 'in 1882 Ireland seemed to be literally a society on the eve of dissolution. The Invincibles still roved with knives about the streets of Dublin. Discontent had been stirred in the ranks of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and a dangerous mutiny broke out in the metropolitan force. Over half of the country the demoralisation of every class, the terror, the fierce hatred, the universal distrust, had grown to an incredible pitch. The moral cowardice of what ought to have been the governing class was astounding. The landlords would hold meetings and agree not to go beyond a certain abatement, and then they would go individually and privately offer to the tenant a greater abatement. Even the agents of the law and the courts were shaken in their duty. The power of random arrest and detention under the Coercion Act of 1881 had not improved the *moral* of magistrates and police. The sheriff would let the word get out that he was

[1] *Life of Dean Church*, p. 299.

coming to make a seizure, and profess surprise that the cattle had vanished. The whole country-side turned out in thousands in half the counties in Ireland to attend flaming meetings, and if a man did not attend, angry neighbours trooped up to know the reason why. The clergy hardly stirred a finger to restrain the wildness of the storm; some did their best to raise it. All that was what Lord Spencer had to deal with; the very foundations of the social fabric rocking.'

The new viceroy attacked the formidable task before him with resolution, minute assiduity, and an inexhaustible store of that steady-eyed patience which is the sovereign requisite of any man who, whether with coercion or without, takes in hand the government of Ireland. He was seconded with high ability and courage by Mr. Trevelyan, the new Irish secretary, whose fortitude was subjected to a far severer trial than has ever fallen to the lot of any Irish secretary before or since. The coercion that Lord Spencer had to administer was at least law. The coercion with which parliament entrusted Mr. Forster the year before was the negation of the spirit of law, and the substitution for it of naked and arbitrary control over the liberty of the subject by executive power—a system as unconstitutional in theory as it was infatuated in policy and calamitous in result. Even before the end of the parliament, Mr. Bright frankly told the House of Commons of this Coercion Act: —'I think that the legislation of 1881 was unfortunately a great mistake, though I was myself a member of the government concerned in it.'

CHAPTER V

EGYPT

(*1881–1882*)

I find many very ready to say what I ought to have done when a battle is over: but I wish some of these persons would come and tell me what to do before the battle.—WELLINGTON.

In 1877 Mr. Gladstone penned words to which later events gave an only too striking verification. 'Territorial questions,' he said, 'are not to be disposed of by arbitrary limits; we cannot enjoy the luxury of taking Egyptian soil by pinches. We may seize an Aden and a Perim, where is no already formed community of inhabitants, and circumscribe a tract at will. But our first site in Egypt, be it by larceny or be it by emption, will be the almost certain egg of a North African empire, that will grow and grow until another Victoria and another Albert, titles of the lake-sources of the White Nile, come within our borders; and till we finally join hands across the equator with Natal and Cape Town, to say nothing of the Transvaal and the Orange River on the south, or of Abyssinia or Zanzibar to be swallowed by way of viaticum on our journey.'[1] It was one of the ironies in which every active statesman's life abounds, that the author of that forecast should have been fated to take his country over its first marches towards this uncoveted destination.

I

For many months after Mr. Gladstone formed his second ministry, there was no reason to suppose that the Egyptian branch of the eastern question, which for ever casts its perplexing shadow over Europe, was likely to give trouble. The new Khedive held a regularly defined position, alike towards his titular sovereign at Constantinople, towards reforming ministers at Cairo, towards the creditors of his state, and towards the two strong European Powers that for different reasons had the supervision of Egyptian affairs in charge. The

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, August, 1877; *Gleanings*, iv. p. 357.

oppression common to oriental governments seemed to be yielding before western standards. The load of interest on a profligate debt was heavy, but it was not unskilfully adjusted. The rate of village usury was falling, and the value of land was rising. Unluckily the Khedive and his ministers neglected the grievances of the army, and in January 1881 its leaders broke out in revolt. The Khedive, without an armed force on whose fidelity he could rely, gave way to the mutineers, and a situation was created, familiar enough in all oriental states, and not unlike that in our own country between Charles I., or in later days the parliament, and the roundhead troopers: anger and revenge in the breast of the affronted civil ruler, distrust and dread of punishment in the mind of the soldiery. During the autumn (1881) the crisis grew more alarming. The Khedive showed neither energy nor tact; he neither calmed the terror of the mutineers nor crushed them. Insubordination in the army began to affect the civil population, and a national party came into open existence in the chamber of notables. The soldiers found a head in Arabi, a native Egyptian, sprung of fellah origin. Want either of stern resolution or of politic vision in the Khedive and his minister, had transferred the reality of power to the insurgents. The Sultan of Turkey here saw his chance; he made a series of diplomatic endeavours to re-establish a shattered sovereignty over his nominal feudatory on the Nile. This pretension, and the spreading tide of disorder, brought England and France actively upon the scene. We can see now, what expert observers on the spot saw then, that the two Powers mistook the nature of the Arabist movement. They perceived in it no more than a military rising. It was in truth national as well as military; it was anti-European, and above all, it was in its objects anti-Turk.

In 1879 the two governments had insisted on imposing over Egypt two controllers, with limited functions but irremovable. This, as Mr. Gladstone argued later, was to bring foreign intervention into the heart of the country, and to establish in the strictest sense a political control.[1] As a matter of fact, not then well known, in September 1879 Lord Salisbury had come to a definite understanding with the French ambassador in London, that the two governments would not tolerate the establishment in Egypt of political influence by any competing European Power; and what was more important, that they were prepared to take action to any extent that might be found necessary to give effect to their views in this respect. The notable acquisition by Lord Beaconsfield of an interest in the Suez Canal, always regarded by Mr. Gladstone as a politically ill-advised and hazardous transaction, had tied the English knot in Egypt still tighter.

The policy of the Gladstone cabinet was defined in general

[1] July 27, 1882.

words in a despatch from the foreign minister to the British agent at Cairo. Lord Granville (November 1881) disclaimed any self-aggrandising designs on the part of either England or France. He proclaimed the desire of the cabinet to uphold in Egypt the administrative independence secured to her by the decrees of the sovereign power on the Bosphorus. Finally he set forth that the only circumstances likely to force the government of the Queen to depart from this course of conduct, would be the occurrence in Egypt of a state of anarchy.[1]

Justly averse to a joint occupation of Egypt by England and France, as the most perilous of all possible courses, the London cabinet looked to the Sultan as the best instrument for restoring order. Here they were confronted by two insurmountable obstacles: first, the steadfast hostility of France to any form of Turkish intervention, and second, that strong current of antipathy to the Sultan which had been set flowing over British opinion in the days of Midlothian.[2]

In December (1881) the puissant genius of Gambetta acquired supremacy for a season, and he without delay pressed upon the British cabinet the necessity of preparing for joint and immediate action. Gambetta prevailed. The Turk was ruled out, and the two Powers of the west determined on action of their own. The particular mode of common action, however, in case action should become necessary, was left entirely open.

Meanwhile the British cabinet was induced to agree to Gambetta's proposal to send instructions to Cairo, assuring the Khedive that England and France were closely associated in the resolve to guard by their united efforts against all causes of complaint, internal or external, which might menace the existing order of things in Egypt. This was a memorable starting-point in what proved an amazing journey. This Joint Note (January 6, 1881) was the first link in a chain of proceedings that brought each of the two governments who were its authors, into the very position that they were most strenuously bent on averting; France eventually ousted herself from Egypt, and England was eventually landed in plenary and permanent occupation. So extraordinary a result only shows how impenetrable were the windings of the labyrinth. The foremost statesmen of England and France were in their conning towers, and England at any rate employed some of the ablest of her agents. Yet each was driven out of an appointed course to an unforeseen and an unwelcome termination. Circumstances like these might teach moderation both

1 Granville and Malet, November 4, 1881.

2 Before Midlothian, however, Mr. Gladstone had in 1877 drawn an important distinction: 'If I find the Turk incapable of establishing a good, just, and well-proportioned government over civilised and Christian races, it does not follow that he is under a similar incapacity when his task shall only be to hold empire over populations wholly or principally Orientals and Mahomedans. On this head I do not know that any verdict of guilty has yet been found by a competent tribunal.'—*Gleanings*, iv. p. 364.

to the French partisans who curse the vacillations of M. de Freycinet, and to the English partisans who, while rejoicing in the ultimate result, curse the vacillations of the cabinet of Mr. Gladstone, in wisely striving to unravel a knot instead of at all risks cutting it.

II

The present writer described the effect of the Joint Note in the following words written at the time:[1]—'At Cairo the Note fell like a bombshell. Nobody there had expected any such declaration, and nobody was aware of any reason why it should have been launched. What was felt was that so serious a step on such delicate ground could not have been adopted without deliberate calculation, nor without some grave intention. The Note was, therefore, taken to mean that the Sultan was to be thrust still further in the background; that the Khedive was to become more plainly the puppet of England and France; and that Egypt would sooner or later in some shape or other be made to share the fate of Tunis. The general effect was, therefore, mischievous in the highest degree. The Khedive was encouraged in his opposition to the sentiments of his Chamber. The military, national, or popular party was alarmed. The Sultan was irritated. The other European Powers were made uneasy. Every element of disturbance was roused into activity.'

It is true that even if no Joint Note had ever been despatched, the prospects of order were unpromising. The most careful analysis of the various elements of society in Egypt by those best acquainted at first hand with all those elements, whether internal or external, whether Egyptian or European, and with all the roots of antagonism thriving among them, exhibited no promise of stability. If Egypt had been a simple case of an oriental government in revolutionary commotion, the ferment might have been left to work itself out. Unfortunately Egypt, in spite of the maps, lies in Europe. So far from being a simple case, it was indescribably entangled, and even the desperate questions that rise in our minds at the mention of the Balkan peninsula, of Armenia, of Constantinople, offer no such complex of difficulties as the Egyptian riddle in 1881-2. The law of liquidation[2]—whatever else we may think of it—at least made the policy of Egypt for the Egyptians unworkable. Yet the British cabinet were not wrong in thinking that this was no reason for sliding into the competing policy of Egypt for the English *and* the French, which would have been more unworkable still.

England strove manfully to hold the ground that she had taken in November. Lord Granville told the British ambassador in Paris that his government disliked intervention either

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, July 1882.

[2] Defining the claims of the European bondholder on revenue.

by themselves or anybody else as much as ever; that they looked upon the experiment of the Chamber with favourable eyes; that they wished to keep the connection of the Porte with Egypt so far as it was compatible with Egyptian liberties; and that the object of the Joint Note was to strengthen the existing government of Egypt. Gambetta, on the other hand, was convinced that all explanations of this sort would only serve further to inflate the enemies of France and England in the Egyptian community, and would encourage their designs upon the law of liquidation. Lord Granville was honourably and consistently anxious to confine himself within the letter of international right, while Gambetta was equally anxious to intervene in Egyptian administration, within right or without it, and to force forward that Anglo-French occupation in which Lord Granville so justly saw nothing but danger and mischief. Once more Lord Granville, at the end of the month which had opened with the Joint Note, in a despatch to the ambassador at Paris (January 30), defined the position of the British cabinet. What measures should be taken to meet Egyptian disorders? The Queen's government had 'a strong objection to the occupation of Egypt by themselves.' Egypt and Turkey would oppose; it would arouse the jealousy of other Powers, who would, as there was even already good reason to believe, make counter demonstrations; and, finally, such an occupation would be as distasteful to the French nation as the sole occupation of Egypt by the French would be to ourselves. Joint occupation by England and France, in short, might lessen some difficulties, but it would seriously aggravate others. Turkish occupation would be a great evil, but it would not entail political dangers as great as those attending the other two courses. As for the French objections to the farther admission of the other European Powers to intervene in Egyptian affairs, the cabinet agreed that England and France had an exceptional position in Egypt, but might it not be desirable to enter into some communication with the other Powers, as to the best way of dealing with a state of things that appeared likely to interfere both with the Sultan's firmans and with Egypt's international engagements?

At this critical moment Gambetta fell from power. The mark that he had set upon western policy in Egypt remained. Good observers on the spot, trained in the great school of India, thought that even if there was no more than a chance of working with the national party, the chance was well worth trying. As the case was put at the time, 'It is impossible to conceive a situation that more imperatively called for caution, circumspection, and deference to the knowledge of observers on the scene, or one that was actually handled with greater rashness and hurry. Gambetta had made up his mind that the military movement was leading to the abyss, and that it must

be peremptorily arrested. It may be that he was right in supposing that the army, which had first found its power in the time of Ismail, would go from bad to worse. But everything turned upon the possibility of pulling up the army, without arousing other elements more dangerous still. M. Gambetta's impatient policy was worked out in his own head without reference to the conditions on the scene, and the result was what might have been expected.'[1]

III

The dual control, the system of carrying on the Egyptian government under the advice of an English and a French agent, came to an end. The rude administration in the provinces fell to pieces. The Khedive was helplessly involved in struggle after struggle with the military insurgents. The army became as undisputed masters of the government, as the Cromwellian army at some moments in our civil war. Meanwhile the British government, true to Mr. Gladstone's constant principle, endeavoured to turn the question from being purely Anglo-French, into an international question. The Powers were not unfavourable, but nothing came of it. Both from Paris and from London somewhat bewildered suggestions proceeded by way of evading the central enigma, whether the intervention should be Turkish or Anglo-French. It was decided at any rate to send powerful Anglo-French fleets to Alexandria, and Mr. Gladstone only regretted that the other Powers (including Turkey) had not been invited to have their flags represented. To this the French objected, with the evil result that the other Powers were displeased, and the good effect that the appearance of the Sultan in the field might have had upon the revolutionary parties in Egypt was lost. On May 21, 1882, M. de Freycinet went so far as to say that, though he was still opposed to Turkish intervention, he would not regard as intervention a case in which Turkish forces were summoned by England and France to operate under Anglo-French control, upon conditions specified by the two Powers. If it became advisable to land troops, recourse should be had on these terms to Turkish troops and them only. Lord Granville acceded. He proposed (May 24) to address the Powers, to procure international sanction for the possible despatch of Turkish troops to Egypt. De Freycinet insisted that no such step was necessary. At the same time (June 1), the minister told the Chamber that there were various courses to which they might be led, but he excluded one, and this was a French military intervention. That declaration narrowed the case to a choice between English intervention, or Turkish, or Anglo-Turkish, all of them known to be profoundly unpalatable to French sentiment. Such was the end of Lord

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, July 1882.

Granville's prudent and loyal endeavour to move in step with France.

The next proposal from M. de Freycinet was a European conference, as Prince Bismarck presumed, to cover the admissibility of Turkish intervention. A conference was too much in accord with the ideas of the British cabinet, not to be welcomed by them. The Turk, however, who now might have had the game in his own hands, after a curious exhibition of duplicity and folly, declined to join, and the conference at first met without him (June 23). Then, pursuing tactics well known at all times at Constantinople, the Sultan made one of his attempts to divide the Powers, by sending a telegram to London (June 25), conferring upon England rights of exclusive control in the administration of Egypt. This Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville declined without even consulting the cabinet, as too violent an infraction, I suppose, of the cardinal principle of European concert. The Queen, anxious for an undivided English control at any price, complained that the question was settled without reference to the cabinet, and here the Queen was clearly not wrong, on doctrines of cabinet authority and cabinet responsibility that were usually held by nobody more strongly than by the prime minister himself.

Mr. Gladstone and his cabinet fought as hard as they could, and for good reasons, against single-handed intervention by Great Britain. When they saw that order could not be re-established without the exercise of force from without, they insisted that this force should be applied by the Sultan as sovereign of Egypt. They proposed this solution to the conference, and Lord Dufferin urged it upon the Sultan. With curious infatuation (repeated a few years later) the Sultan stood aside. When it became necessary to make immediate provision for the safety of the Suez Canal, England proposed to undertake this duty conjointly with France, and solicited the co-operation of any other Power. Italy was specially invited to join. Then when the progress of the rebellion had broken the Khedive's authority and brought Egypt to anarchy, England invited France and Italy to act with her in putting the rebellion down. France and Italy declined. England still urged the Porte to send troops, insisting only on such conditions as were indispensable to secure united action. The Porte again held back, and before it carried out an agreement to sign a military convention, events had moved too fast.[1] Thus, by the Sultan's perversities and the fluctuations of purpose and temper in France, single-handed intervention was inexorably forced upon the one Power that had most consistently striven to avoid it. Bismarck, it is true, judged that Arabi was now a power to be reckoned with; the Austrian representatives used language of like purport; and Freycinet also inclined to coming to terms with Arabi. The

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Dufferin. Oct. 5, 1882.

British cabinet had persuaded themselves that the overthrow of the military party was an indispensable precedent to any return of decently stable order.

The situation in Egypt can hardly be adequately understood without a multiplicity of details for which this is no place, and in such cases details are everything. Diplomacy in which the Sultan of Turkey plays a part is always complicated, and at the Conference of Constantinople the cobwebs were spun and brushed away and spun again with diligence unexampled. The proceedings were without any effect upon the course of events. The Egyptian revolution ran its course. The moral support of Turkish commissioners sent by the Sultan to Cairo came to nothing, and the moral influence of the Anglo-French squadron at Alexandria came to nothing, and in truth it did more harm than good. The Khedive's throne and life were alike in danger. The Christians flocked down from the interior. The residents in Alexandria were trembling for their lives. At the end of May our agent at Cairo informed his government that a collision between Moslems and Christians might occur at any moment. On June 11 some fifty Europeans were massacred by a riotous mob at Alexandria. The British consul was severely wounded, and some sailors of the French fleet were among the killed. Greeks and Jews were murdered in other places. At last a decisive blow was struck. For several weeks the Egyptians had been at work upon the fortifications of Alexandria, and upon batteries commanding the British fleet. The British admiral was instructed (July 3) that if this operation were continued, he should immediately destroy the earthworks and silence the batteries. After due formalities he (July 11) opened fire at seven in the morning, and by half-past five in the evening the Alexandria guns were silenced. Incendiaries set the town on fire, the mob pillaged it, and some murders were committed. The French ships had sailed away; their government having previously informed the British ambassador in Paris that the proposed operation would be an act of war against Egypt, and such an act of war without the express consent of the Chamber would violate the constitution.

The new situation in which England now found herself was quickly described by the prime minister to the House of Commons. On July 22, he said:—'We should not fully discharge our duty, if we did not endeavour to convert the present interior state of Egypt from anarchy and conflict to peace and order. We shall look during the time that remains to us to the co-operation of the Powers of civilised Europe, if it be in any case open to us. But if every chance of obtaining co-operation is exhausted, the work will be undertaken by the single power of England.' As for the position of the Powers it may be described in this way. Germany and Austria were cordial and respectful; France anxious to retain a completely

friendly understanding, but wanting some equivalent for the inevitable decline of her power in Egypt; Italy jealous of our renewing close relations with France; Russia still sore, and on the lookout for some plausible excuse for getting the Berlin arrangement of 1878 revised in her favour, without getting into difficulties with Berlin itself.

France was not unwilling to take joint action with England for the defence of the canal, but would not join England in intervention beyond that object. At the same time Freycinet wished it to be understood that France had no objection to our advance, if we decided to make an advance. This was more than once repeated. Gambetta in vehement wrath declared his dread lest the refusal to co-operate with England should shake an alliance of priceless value; and lest besides that immense catastrophe, it should hand over to the possession of England for ever, territories, rivers, and ports where the French right to live and trade was as good as hers. The mighty orator declaimed in vain. Suspicion of the craft of Bismarck was in France more lively than suspicion of aggressive designs in the cabinet of Mr. Gladstone, and the Chamber was reminded how extremely well it would suit Germany that France should lock up her military force in Tunis yesterday, in Egypt to-day. Ingenious speakers, pointing to Europe covered with camps of armed men; pointing to the artful statesmanship that had pushed Austria into Bosnia and Herzegovina, and encouraged France herself to occupy Tunis; pointing to the expectant nations reserving their liberty for future occasions—all urgently exhorted France now to reserve her own liberty of action too. Under the influence of such ideas as these, and by the working of rival personalities and parties, the Chamber by an immense majority turned the Freycinet government out of office (July 29) rather than sanction even such a degree of intervention as concerned the protection of the Suez Canal.

Nine days after the bombardment of Alexandria, the British cabinet decided on the despatch of what was mildly called an expeditionary force to the Mediterranean, under the command of Sir Garnet Wolseley. The general's alertness, energy, and prescient calculation brought him up to Arabi at Tel-el-Kebir (Sept. 13), and there at one rapid and decisive blow he crushed the military insurrection.[1]

IV

The bombardment of Alexandria cost Mr. Gladstone the British colleague who in fundamentals stood closest to him of them all. In the opening days of July, amid differences of opinion that revealed themselves in frequent and protracted meetings of the cabinet, it was thought probable that Mr.

[1] A share of the credit of success is due to the admirable efficiency of Mr. Childers at the War Office. See Sir Garnet's letter to him, *Life of Childers*, ii. p. 117.

Gladstone and Bright would resign rather than be parties to despatching troops to the Mediterranean; and the two representative radicals were expected to join them. Then came the bombardment, but only Bright went—not until after earnest protestations from the prime minister. As Mr. Gladstone described things later to the Queen, Bright's letters and conversation consisted very much more of references to his past career and strong statements of feeling, than of attempts to reason on the existing facts of the case, with the obligations that they appeared to entail. Not satisfied with his own efforts, Mr. Gladstone turned to Lord Granville, who had been a stout friend in old days when Bright's was a name of reproach and obloquy:—

July 12.—Here is the apprehended letter from dear old John Bright, which turns a white day into a black one. It would not be fair in me to beg an interview. His kindness would make him reluctant to decline; but he would come laden with an apprehension, that I by impetuosity and tenacity should endeavour to overbear him. But pray consider whether you could do it. He would not have the same fear of your dealings with him. I do not think you could get a *reversal*, but perhaps he would give you another short delay, and at the end of this the sky might be further settled.

Two days later Mr. Gladstone and Bright had a long, and we may be sure that it was an earnest, conversation. The former of them the same day put his remarks into the shape of a letter, which the reader may care to have, as a statement of the case for the first act of armed intervention, which led up by a direct line to the English occupation of Egypt, Soudan wars, and to some other events from which the veil is not even yet lifted:—

The act of Tuesday [the bombardment of Alexandria] was a solemn and painful one, for which I feel myself to be highly responsible, and it is my earnest desire that we should all view it now, as we shall wish at the last that we had viewed it. Subject to this testing rule, I address you as one whom I suppose not to believe all use whatever of military force to be unlawful; as one who detests war in general and believes most wars to have been sad errors (in which I greatly agree with you), but who in regard to any particular use of force would look upon it for a justifying cause, and after it would endeavour to appreciate its actual effect.

The general situation in Egypt had latterly become one in which everything was governed by sheer military violence. Every legitimate authority—the Khedive, the Sultan, the notables, and the best men of the country, such as Cherif and Sultan pashas—had been put down, and a situation of *force* had been created, which could only be met by force. This being so, we had laboured to the uttermost, almost alone but not without success, to secure that if force were employed against the violence of Arabi, it should be force armed with the highest sanction of law; that it should be the force of the sovereign, authorised and restrained by the united Powers of Europe, who in such a case represent the civilised world.

While this is going on, a by-question arises. The British fleet, lawfully present in the waters of Alexandria, had the right and duty of self-defence. It demanded the discontinuance of attempts made to strengthen the armament of the fortifications. . . . Met by fraud and falsehood in its demand, it required surrender with a view to immediate dismantling, and this being refused, it proceeded to destroy. . . . The conflagration which followed, the pillage and any other outrages effected by the released convicts, these are not due to us, but to the seemingly wanton wickedness of Arabi. . . .

Such being the amount of our act, what has been its reception and its effect? As to its reception, we have not received nor heard of a word of disapproval from any Power great or small, or from any source having the slightest authority. As to its effect, it has taught many lessons, struck a heavy, perhaps a deadly, blow at the reign of violence, brought again into light the beginnings of legitimate rule, shown the fanaticism of the East that massacre of Europeans is not likely to be perpetrated with impunity, and greatly advanced the Egyptian question towards a permanent and peaceable solution. I feel that in being party to this work I have been a labourer in the cause of peace. Your co-operation in that cause, with reference to preceding and collateral points, has been of the utmost value, and has enabled me to hold my ground, when without you it might have been difficult.

The correspondence closed with a wish from Mr. Gladstone: 'Believe in the sore sense of practical loss, and the (I trust) unalterable friendship and regard with which I remain, etc.' When Bright came to explain his resignation in parliament, he said something about the moral law, which led to a sharp retort from the prime minister, but still their friendship did appear to remain unalterable, as Mr. Gladstone trusted that it would.

When the question by and by arose whether Arabi should be put to death, Bright wrote to the prime minister on behalf of clemency. Mr. Gladstone in replying took a severe line: 'I am sorry to say the inquiry is too likely to show that Arabi is very much more than a rebel. Crimes of the gravest kind have been committed; and with most of them he stands, I fear, in *presumptive* (that is, unproved) connection. In truth I must say that, having begun with no prejudice against him, and with the strong desire that he should be saved, I am almost driven to the conclusion that he is a bad man, and that it will not be an injustice if he goes the road which thousands of his innocent countrymen through him have trodden.' It is a great mistake to suppose that Mr. Gladstone was all leniency, or that when he thought ill of men, he stayed either at palliating words or at half-measures.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL JUBILEE

(*1882–1883*)

ἀγωνίζεται γὰρ ὥσπερ ἀθλητὴς κατὰ τὸν βίον, ὅταν δὲ διαγωνίσηται, τότε τυγχάνει τῶν προσηκόντων.—PLUTARCH, *Moralia*, c. 18.

He strives like an athlete all his life long, and then when he comes to the end of his striving, he has what is meet.

ἐπάμεροι· τί δέ τις; τί δ' οὔ τις; σκιᾶς ὄναρ
ἄνθρωπος. ἀλλ' ὅταν αἴγλα διόσδοτος ἔλθῃ,
λαμπρὸν φέγγος ἔπεστιν ἀνδρῶν καὶ μείλιχος αἰών.
PINDAR, *Pyth.* viii. 135.

Things of a day! What is a man? What, when he is not? A dream of shadow is mankind. Yet when there comes down glory imparted from God, radiant light shines among men and genial days.

θανεῖν δ' οἷσιν ἀνάγκα, τί κέ τις ἀνώνυμον
γῆρας ἐν σκότῳ καθήμενος ἔψοι μάταν;
Ol. i. 131.

Die since we must, wherefore should a man sit idle and nurse in the gloom days of long life without aim, without name?

THE words from 'antique books' that I have just translated and transcribed, were written out by Mr. Gladstone inside the cover of the little diary for 1882-3. To what the old world had to say, he added Dante's majestic commonplace: 'You were not made to live like brutes, but to pursue virtue and knowledge.'[1] These meditations on the human lot, on the mingling of our great hopes with the implacable realities, made the vital air in which all through his life he drew deep breath. Adjusted to his ever vivid religious creed, amid all the turbid business of the worldly elements, they were the sedative and the restorer. Yet here and always the last word was Effort. The moods that in less strenuous natures ended in melancholy, philosophic or poetic, to him were fresh incentives to redeem the time.

1. Considerate la vostra semenza:
Fatti non foste a viver come bruti,
Ma per seguir virtute e conoscenza.
Inferno, xxvi. 118.

The middle of December 1882 marked his political jubilee. It was now half a century since he had entered public life, and the youthful graduate from Oxford had grown to be the foremost man in his country. Yet these fifty courses of the sun and all the pageant of the world had in some ways made but little difference in him. In some ways, it seemed as if time had rolled over him in vain. He had learned many lessons. He had changed his party, his horizons were far wider, new social truths had made their way into his impressionable mind, he recognised new social forces. His aims for the church, that he loved as ardently as he gloried in a powerful and beneficent state, had undergone a revolution. Since 1866 he had come into contact with democracy at close quarters; the Bulgarian campaign and Midlothian lighting up his early faith in liberty, had inflamed him with new feeling for the voice of the people. As much as in the early time when he had prayed to be allowed to go into orders, he was moved by a dominating sense of the common claims and interests of mankind. 'The contagion of the world's slow stain' had not infected him; the lustre and long continuity of his public performances still left all his innermost ideals constant and undimmed.

His fifty years of public life had wrought his early habits of severe toil, method, exactness, concentration, into cast-iron. Whether they had sharpened what is called knowledge of the world, or taught him insight into men and skill in discrimination among men, it is hard to say. He always talked as if he found the world pretty much what he had expected. Man, he used often to say, is the least comprehensible of creatures, and of men the most incomprehensible are the politicians. Yet nobody was less of the cynic. As for Weltschmerz, world-weariness, ennui, tedium vitæ—that enervating family were no acquaintances of his, now nor at any time. None of the vicissitudes of long experience ever tempted him either into the shallow satire on life that is so often the solace of the little and the weak; or on the other hand into the *saeva indignatio*, the sombre brooding reprobation, that has haunted some strong souls from Tacitus and Dante to Pascal, Butler, Swift, Turgot. We may, indeed, be sure that neither of these two moods can ever hold a place in the breast of a commanding orator.

II

I have spoken of his new feeling for democracy. At the point of time at which we have arrived, it was heartily reciprocated. The many difficulties in the course of public affairs that confronted parliament and the nation for two years or more after Mr. Gladstone's second accession to power, did little to weaken either his personal popularity or his hold upon the confidence

of the constituencies. For many years he and Mr. Disraeli had stood out above the level of their adherents; they were the centre of every political storm. Disraeli was gone (April 19, 1881), commemorated by Mr. Gladstone in a parliamentary tribute that cost him much searching of heart beforehand, and was a masterpiece of grace and good feeling. Mr. Gladstone stood alone, concentrating upon himself by his personal ascendency and public history the bitter antagonism of his opponents, only matched by the enthusiasm and devotion of his followers. The rage of faction had seldom been more unbridled. The Irish and the young fourth party were rivals in malicious vituperation; of the two, the Irish on the whole observed the better manners. Once Mr. Gladstone was wounded to the quick, as letters show, when a member of the fourth party denounced as 'a government of infamy' the ministry with whose head he had long been on terms of more than friendship alike as host and guest. He could not fell his trees, he could not read the lessons in Hawarden church, without finding these innocent habits turned into material for platform mockery. 'In the eyes of the opposition, as indeed of the country,' said a great print that was never much his friend, 'he is the government and he is the liberal party,' and the writer went on to scold Lord Salisbury for wasting his time in the concoction of angry epigrams and pungent phrases that were neither new nor instructive.[1] They pierced no joint in the mail of the warrior at whom they were levelled. The nation at large knew nothing of difficulties at Windsor, nothing of awkward passages in the cabinet, nothing of the trying egotisms of gentlemen out of the cabinet who insisted that they ought to be in. Nor would such things have made any difference except in his favour, if the public had known all about them. The Duke of Argyll and Lord Lansdowne had left him; his Irish policy had cost him his Irish secretary, and his Egyptian policy had cost him Mr. Bright. They had got into a war, they had been baffled in legislation, they had to raise the most unpopular of taxes, there had been the frightful tragedy in Ireland. Yet all seemed to have been completely overcome in the public mind by the power of Mr. Gladstone in uniting his friends and frustrating his foes, and the more bitterly he was hated by society, the more warmly attached were the mass of the people. Anybody who had foreseen all this would have concluded that the government must be in extremity, but he went to the Guildhall on the 9th of November 1882, and had the best possible reception on that famous stage. One tory newspaper felt bound to admit that Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues had rehabilitated themselves in the public judgment with astounding rapidity, and were now almost as strong in popular and parliamentary support as when they first took office.[2] Another tory print

[1] *Times*, Dec. 8, 1882. [2] *Standard*, Nov. 16, 1882.

declared Mr. Gladstone to be stronger, more popular, more despotic, than at any time since the policy to carry out which he was placed in office was disclosed.[1] The session of 1882 had only been exceeded in duration by two sessions for fifty years.

The reader has had pictures enough from friendly hands, so here is one from a persistent foe, one of the most brilliant journalists of that time, who listened to him from the gallery for years. The words are from an imaginary dialogue, and are put into the mouth of a well-known whig in parliament :—

Sir, I can only tell you that, profoundly as I distrusted him, and lightly as on the whole I valued the external qualities of his eloquence, I have never listened to him even for a few minutes without ceasing to marvel at his influence over men. That white-hot face, stern as a Covenanter's yet mobile as a comedian's ; those restless, flashing eyes ; that wondrous voice, whose richness its northern burr enriched as the tang of the wood brings out the mellowness of a rare old wine ; the masterly cadence of his elocution ; the vivid energy of his attitudes ; the fine animation of his gestures ;—sir, when I am assailed through eye and ear by this compacted phalanx of assailants, what wonder that the stormed outposts of the senses should spread the contagion of their own surrender through the main encampment of the mind, and that against my judgment, in contempt of my conscience, nay, in defiance of my very will, I should exclaim, 'This is indeed the voice of truth and wisdom. This man is honest and sagacious beyond his fellows. He must be believed, he must be obeyed!'[2]

On the day of his political jubilee (Dec. 13), the event was celebrated in many parts of the country, and he received congratulatory telegrams from all parts of the world ; for it was not only two hundred and forty liberal associations who sent him joyful addresses. The Roumelians poured out aloud their gratitude to him for the interest he constantly manifested in their cause, and for his powerful and persistent efforts for their emancipation. From Athens came the news that they had subscribed for the erection of his statue, and from the Greeks also came a splendid casket. In his letter of thanks,[3] after remonstrating against its too great material value, he said :—

I know not well how to accept it, yet I am still less able to decline it, when I read the touching lines of the accompanying address, in itself an ample token, in which you have so closely associated my name with the history and destinies of your country. I am not vain enough to think that I have deserved any of the numerous acknowledgments which I have received, especially from Greeks, on completing half a century of parliamentary life. Your over-estimate of my deeds ought rather to humble than to inflate me. But to have laboured within the measure of justice for the Greece of the future, is one of my happiest political

[1] *Morning Post*, Oct. 20, 1882.

[2] Traill's *New Lucian*, pp. 305-6,—in spite of politics, a book of admirable wit, scholarship, and ingenious play of mind.

[3] To Mr. Hazzopolo, Dec. 22, 1882.

recollections, and to have been trained in a partial knowledge of the Greece of the past has largely contributed to whatever slender faculties I possess for serving my own country or my kind. I earnestly thank you for your indulgent judgment and for your too costly gifts, and I have the honour to remain, etc.

What was deeper to him than statues or caskets was found in letters from comparative newcomers into the political arena thanking him not only for his long roll of public service, but much more for the example and encouragement that his life gave to younger men endeavouring to do something for the public good. To one of these he wrote (Dec. 15) :—

I thank you most sincerely for your kind and friendly letter. As regards the prospective part of it, I can assure you that I should be slow to plead the mere title to retirement which long labour is supposed to earn. But I have always watched, and worked according to what I felt to be the measure of my own mental force. A monitor from within tells me that though I may still be equal to some portions of my duties, or as little unequal as heretofore, there are others which I cannot face. I fear therefore I must keep in view an issue which cannot be evaded.

III

As it happened, this volume of testimony to the affection, gratitude, and admiration, thus ready to go out to him from so many quarters coincided in point of time with one or two extreme vexations in the conduct of his daily business as head of the government. Some of them were aggravated by the loss of a man whom he regarded as one of his two or three most important friends. In September 1882 the Dean of Windsor died, and in his death Mr. Gladstone suffered a heavy blow. To the end he always spoke of Dr. Wellesley's friendship, and the value of his sagacity and honest service, with a warmth by this time given to few.

Death of the Dean of Windsor.

To Lord Granville, Sept. 18, 1882.—My belief is that he has been cognizant of every crown appointment in the church for nearly a quarter of a century, and that the whole of his influence has been exercised with a deep insight and a large heart for the best interests of the crown and the church. If their character during this period has been in the main more satisfactory to the general mind of the country than at some former periods, it has been in no small degree owing to him.

It has been my duty to recommend I think for fully forty of the higher appointments, including twelve which were episcopal. I rejoice to say that every one of them has had his approval. But I do not scruple to own that he has been in no small degree a help and guide to me ; and as to the Queen, whose heart I am sure is at this moment bleeding, I do not believe she can possibly fill his place as a friendly adviser either in ecclesiastical or other matters.

To the Duchess of Wellington, Sept. 24.—He might, if he had chosen, have been on his way to the Archbishopric of Canterbury. Ten or

eleven years ago, when the present primate was not expected to recover, the question of the succession was considered, and I had her Majesty's consent to the idea I have now mentioned. But, governed I think by his great modesty, he at once refused.

To Mrs. Wellesley, Nov. 19, 1882.—I have remained silent, at least to you, on a subject which for no day has been absent from my thoughts, because I felt that I could add nothing to your consolations and could take away nothing from your grief under your great calamity. But the time has perhaps come when I may record my sense of a loss of which even a small share is so large. The recollections of nearly sixty years are upon my mind, and through all that period I have felt more and more the force and value of your husband's simple and noble character. No less have I entertained an ever-growing sense of his great sagacity and the singularly true and just balance of his mind. We owe much indeed to you both for your constantly renewed kindness, but I have another debt to acknowledge in the invaluable assistance which he afforded me in the discharge of one among the most important and most delicate of my duties. This void never can be filled, and it helps me in some degree to feel what must be the void to you. Certainly he was happy in the enjoyment of love and honour from all who knew him; yet these were few in comparison with those whom he so wisely and so warmly served without their knowing it; and the love and honour paid him, great as they were, could not be as great as he deserved. His memory is blessed—may his rest be deep and sweet, and may the memory and example of him ever help you in your onward pilgrimage.

The same week Dr. Pusey died—a name that filled so large a space in the religious history of England for some thirty years of the century. Between Mr. Gladstone and him the old relations of affectionate friendship subsisted unbroken, notwithstanding the emancipation, as we may call it, of the statesman from maxims and principles, though not, so far as I know, from any of the leading dogmatic beliefs cherished by the divine. 'I hope,' he wrote to Phillimore (Sept. 20, 1882) 'to attend Dr. Pusey's funeral to-morrow at Oxford. . . . I shall have another mournful office to discharge in attending the funeral of the Dean of Windsor, more mournful than the first. Dr. Pusey's death is the ingathering of a ripe shock, and I go to his obsequies in token of deep respect and in memory of much kindness from him early in my life. But the death of Dean Wellesley is to my wife and me an unexpected and very heavy blow, also to me an irreparable loss. I had honoured and loved him from Eton days.'

The loss of Dean Wellesley's counsels was especially felt in ecclesiastical appointments, and the greatest of these was made necessary by the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury at the beginning of December. That the prime minister should regard so sage, conciliatory, and large-minded a steersman as Dr. Tait with esteem was certain, and their relations were easy and manly. Still, Tait had been an active liberal when Mr. Gladstone was a tory, and from the distant days of the *Tracts for*

the Times, when Tait had stood among the foremost in open dislike of the new tenets, their paths in the region of theology lay wide apart. 'I well remember,' says Dean Lake, 'a conversation with Mr. Gladstone on Tait's appointment to London in 1856, when he was much annoyed at Tait's being preferred to Bishop Wilberforce, and of which he reminded me nearly thirty years afterwards, at the time of the archbishop's death, by saying, "Ah! I remember you maintaining to me at that time that his σεμνότης and his judgment would make him a great bishop."'[1] And so, from the point of ecclesiastical statesmanship, he unquestionably was.

The recommendation of a successor in the historic see of Canterbury, we may be very certain, was no common event to Mr. Gladstone. Tait on his deathbed had given his opinion that Dr. Harold Browne, the Bishop of Winchester, would do more than any other man to keep the peace of the church. The Queen was strong in the same sense, thinking that the bishop might resign in a year or two, if he could not do the work. He was now seventy-one years old, and Mr. Gladstone judged this to be too advanced an age for the metropolitan throne. He was himself now seventy-three, and though his sense of humour was not always of the protective kind, he felt the necessity of some explanatory reason, and with him to seek a plea was to find one. He wrote to the Bishop of Winchester:—

. . . It may seem strange that I, who in my own person exhibit so conspicuously the anomaly of a disparate conjunction between years and duties, should be thus forward in interpreting the circumstances of another case certainly more mitigated in many respects, yet differing from my own case in one vital point, the newness of the duties of the English, or rather anglican or British primacy to a diocesan bishop, however able and experienced, and the newness of mental attitude and action, which they would require. Among the materials of judgment in such an instance, it seems right to reckon precedents for what they are worth; and I cannot find that from the time of Archbishop Sheldon any one has assumed the primacy at so great an age as seventy. Juxon, the predecessor of Sheldon, was much older; but his case was altogether peculiar. I cannot say how pleasant it would have been to me personally, but for the barrier I have named, to mark my respect and affection for your lordship by making to you such a proposal. What is more important is, that I am directly authorised by her Majesty to state that this has been the single impediment to her conferring the honour, and imposing the burden, upon you of such an offer.[2]

The world made free with the honoured name of Church, the Dean of Saint Paul's, and it has constantly been said that he

[1] *Life of Tait*, i. p. 109.

[2] Bishop Browne writes to a friend (*Life*, p. 457): 'Gladstone, I learned both from himself and others, searched into all precedents from the Commonwealth to the present day for a primate who began his work at seventy, and found none but Juxon. Curiously, I have been reading that he himself, prompted by Bishop Wilberforce, wanted Palmerston to appoint Sumner (of Winchester) when he was seventy-two. It was when they feared they could not get Longley (who was sixty-eight).'

declined the august preferment to Canterbury on this occasion. In that story there is no truth. 'Formal offer,' the Dean himself wrote to a friend, 'there was none, and could not be, for I had already on another occasion told my mind to Gladstone, and said that reasons of health, apart from other reasons, made it impossible for me to think of anything, except a retirement altogether from office.'[1]

When it was rumoured that Mr. Gladstone intended to recommend Dr. Benson, then Bishop of Truro, to the archbishopric, a political supporter came to remonstrate with him. 'The Bishop of Truro is a strong tory,' he said, 'but that is not all. He has joined Mr. Raikes's election committee at Cambridge; and it was only last week that Raikes made a violent personal attack on yourself.' 'Do you know,' replied Mr. Gladstone, 'you have just supplied me with a strong argument in Dr. Benson's favour? For if he had been a worldly man or self-seeker, he would not have done anything so imprudent.' Perhaps we cannot wonder that whips and wirepullers deemed this to be somewhat over-ingenious, a Christianity out of season. Even liberals who took another point of view, still asked themselves how it was that when church preferment came his way, the prime minister so often found the best clergymen in the worst politicians. They should have remembered that he was of those who believed 'no more glorious church in Christendom to exist than the church of England'; and its official ordering was in his eyes not any less, even if it was not infinitely more, important in the highest interests of the nation than the construction of a cabinet or the appointment of permanent heads of departments. The church was at this moment, moreover, in one of those angry and perilous crises that came of the Elizabethan settlement and the Act of Uniformity, and the anglican revival forty years ago, and all the other things that mark the arrested progress of the Reformation in England. The anti-ritualist hunt was up. Civil courts were busy with the conscience and conduct of the clergy. Harmless but contumacious priests were under lock and key. It seemed as if more might follow them, or else as if the shock of the great tractarian catastrophe of the forties might in some new shape recur. To recommend an archbishop in times like these could to a churchman be no light responsibility.

With such thoughts in his mind, however we may judge them, it is not altogether surprising that in seeking an ecclesiastical governor for an institution to him the most sacred and beloved of all forms of human association, Mr. Gladstone should have cared very little whether the personage best fitted in spirituals was quite of the right shade as to state temporals. The labour that he now expended on finding the best man is attested by voluminous correspondence. Dean Church, who

[1] *Life and Letters of Dean Church*, p. 307.

was perhaps the most freely consulted by the prime minister, says, 'Of one thing I am quite certain ; that never for hundreds of years has so much honest disinterested pains been taken to fill the primacy—such inquiry and trouble resolutely followed out to find the really fittest man, apart from every personal and political consideration, as in this case.'[1]

Another ecclesiastical vacancy that led to volumes of correspondence was the deanery of Westminster the year before. In the summer of 1881 Dean Stanley died, and it is interesting to note how easy Mr. Gladstone found it to do full justice to one for whom as erastian and latitudinarian he could in opinion have such moderate approval. In offering to the Queen his 'cordial sympathy' for the friend whom she had lost, he told her how early in his own life and earlier still in the dean's he had opportunities of watching the development of his powers, for they had both been educated at a small school near the home of Mr. Gladstone's boyhood.[2] He went on to speak of Stanley's boundless generosity and brilliant gifts, his genial and attaching disposition. 'There may be,' he said, 'and must be much diversity as to parts of the opinions of Dean Stanley, but he will be long remembered as one who was capable of the deepest and widest love, and who received it in return.'

Far away from these regions of what he irreverently called the shovel hat, about this time Carlyle died (Feb. 4, 1881), a firm sympathiser with Mr. Gladstone in his views of the unspeakable Turk, but in all else the rather boisterous preacher of a gospel directly antipathetic. 'Carlyle is at least a great fact in the literature of his time ; and has contributed largely, in some respects too largely, towards forming its characteristic habits of thought.' So Mr. Gladstone wrote in 1876, in a highly interesting parallel between Carlyle and Macaulay—both of them honest, he said, both notwithstanding their honesty partisans ; both of them, though variously, poets using the vehicle of prose ; both having the power of painting portraits extraordinary for vividness and strength ; each of them vastly though diversely powerful in expression, each more powerful in expression than in thought ; neither of them to be resorted to for comprehensive disquisition, nor for balanced and impartial judgments.[3] Perhaps it was too early in 1876 to speak of Carlyle as forming the characteristic habits of thought of his time, but undoubtedly now when he died, his influence was beginning to tell heavily against the speculative liberalism that had reigned in England for two generations, with enormous advantage to the peace, prosperity and power of the country and the two generations concerned. Half lights and half truths are, as Mr. Gladstone implies, the utmost that Carlyle's works were found to yield in philosophy and history,

[1] *Life and Letters of Dean Church*, p. 307.

[2] See vol. i. p. 35.

[3] *Gleanings*, ii. p. 287.

but his half lights pointed in the direction in which men for more material reasons thought that they desired to go.

IV

A reconstruction of the ministry had become necessary by his own abandonment of the exchequer. For one moment it was thought that Lord Hartington might become chancellor, leaving room for Lord Derby at the India office, but Lord Derby was not yet ready to join. In inviting Mr. Childers to take his place as chancellor of the exchequer, Mr. Gladstone told him (Dec. 1, 1882) :—'The basis of my action is not so much a desire to be relieved from labour, as an anxiety to give the country a much better finance minister than myself,—one whose eyes will be always ranging freely and vigilantly over the whole area of the great establishments, the public service and the laws connected with his office, for the purposes of improvement and of good husbandry.'

The claim of Sir Charles Dilke to a seat in the cabinet had become irresistible alike by his good service as under-secretary at the foreign office, and by his position out of doors ; and as the admission of a radical must be balanced by a whig—so at least it was judged—Mr. Gladstone succeeded in inducing Lord Derby to join, though he had failed with him not long before.[1]

Apart from general objections at court, difficulties arose about the distribution of office. Mr. Chamberlain, who has always had his full share of the virtues of staunch friendship, agreed to give up to Sir C. Dilke his own office, which he much liked, and take the duchy, which he did not like at all. In acknowledging Mr. Chamberlain's letter (Dec. 14) Mr. Gladstone wrote to him, 'I shall be glad, if I can, to avoid acting upon it. But I cannot refrain from at once writing a hearty line to acknowledge the self-sacrificing spirit in which it is written ; and which, I am sure, you will never see cause to repent or change.' This, however, was found to be no improvement, for Mr. Chamberlain's language about ransoms to be paid by possessors of property, the offence of not toiling and spinning, and the services rendered by courtiers to kings, was not much less repugnant than rash assertions about the monarch evading the income-tax. All contention on personal points was a severe trial to Mr. Gladstone, and any conflict with the wishes of the Queen tried him most of all. One of his audiences upon these affairs Mr. Gladstone mentions in his diary : 'Dec. 11.—Off at 12.45 to Windsor in the frost and fog. Audience of her Majesty at 3. Most difficult ground, but aided by her beautiful manners, we got over it better than might have been expected.' The dispute was stubborn, but like all else it came to an end ; colleagues were obliging, holes and pegs were accommodated, and Lord Derby went to the colonial office, and Sir C. Dilke

[1] Lord Derby had refused office in the previous May.

to the local government board. An officer of the court, who was in all the secrets and had foreseen all the difficulties, wrote that the actual result was due 'to the judicious manner in which Mr. Gladstone managed everything. He argued in a friendly way, urging his views with moderation, and appealed to the Queen's sense of courtesy.'

In the course of his correspondence with the Queen, the prime minister drew her attention (Dec. 18) to the fact that when the cabinet was formed it included three ministers reputed to belong to the radical section, Mr. Bright, Mr. Forster, and Mr. Chamberlain, and of these only the last remained. The addition of Lord Derby was an addition drawn from the other wing of the party. Another point presented itself. The cabinet originally contained eight commoners and six peers. There were now seven peers and six commoners. This made it requisite to add a commoner. As for Mr. Chamberlain, the minister assured the Queen that though he had not yet, like Mr. Bright, undergone the mollifying influence of age and experience, his leanings on foreign policy would be far more acceptable to her Majesty than those of Mr. Bright, while his views were not known to be any more democratic in principle. He further expressed his firm opinion (Dec. 22) that though Lord Derby might on questions of peace and war be some shades nearer to the views of Mr. Bright than the other members of the cabinet, yet he would never go anything like the length of Mr. Bright in such matters. In fact, said Mr. Gladstone, the cabinet must be deemed a little less pacific now than it was at its first formation. This at least was a consolatory reflection.

Ministerial reconstruction is a trying moment for the politician who thinks himself 'not a favourite with his stars,' and is in a hurry for a box seat before his time has come. Mr. Gladstone was now harassed with some importunities of this kind.[1] Personal collision with any who stood in the place of friends was always terrible to him. His gift of sleep deserted him. 'It is disagreeable to talk of oneself,' he wrote to Lord Granville (Jan. 2, 1883), 'when there is so much of more importance to think and speak about, but I am sorry to say that the incessant strain and pressure of work, and especially the multiplication of these personal questions is overdoing me, and for the first time my power of sleep is seriously giving way. I dare say it would soon right itself if I could offer it any other medicine than the medicine in Hood's "Song of the Shirt."'

[1] The matter itself has no importance, but a point of principle or etiquette at one time connected with it is perhaps worth mentioning. To a colleague earlier in the year Mr. Gladstone wrote:—'I can affirm with confidence that the notion of a title in the cabinet to be consulted on the succession to a cabinet office is absurd. It is a title which cabinet ministers do not possess. During thirty-eight years since I first entered the cabinet, I have never known more than a friendly announcement before publicity, and very partial consultation perhaps with one or two, especially the leaders in the second House.'

And the next day he wrote: 'Last night I improved, 3½ hours to 4½, but this is different from 7 and 8, my uniform standard through life.' And two days later:—'The matter of sleep is with me a very grave one. I am afraid I may have to go up and consult Clark. My habit has always been to reckon my hours rather exultingly, and say how little I am awake. It is not impossible that I may have to ask you to meet me in London, but I will not do this except in necessity. I think that, to convey a clear idea, I should say I attach no importance to the broken sleep itself; it is the state of the brain, tested by my own sensations, when I begin my work in the morning, which may make me need higher assurance.' Sir Andrew Clark, 'overflowing with kindness, as always,' went down to Hawarden (Jan. 7), examined, and listened to the tale of heavy wakeful nights. While treating the case as one of temporary and accidental derangement, he instantly forbade a projected expedition to Midlothian, and urged change of air and scene.

This prohibition eased some of the difficulties at Windsor, where Midlothian was a name of dubious association, and in announcing to the Queen the abandonment by Dr. Clark's orders of the intended journey to the north, Mr. Gladstone wrote (Jan. 8, 1883):—

In your Majesty's very kind reference on the 5th to his former visits to Midlothian, and to his own observations on the 24th April 1880, your Majesty remarked that he had said he did not then think himself a responsible person. He prays leave to fill up the outline which these words convey by saying he at that time (to the best of his recollection) humbly submitted to your Majesty his admission that he must personally bear the consequences of all that he had said, and that he thought some things suitable to be said by a person out of office which could not suitably be said by a person in office; also that, as is intimated by your Majesty's words, the responsibilities of the two positions severally were different. With respect to the political changes named by your Majesty, Mr. Gladstone considers that the very safe measure of extending to the counties the franchise enjoyed by the boroughs stands in all likelihood for early consideration; but he doubts whether there can be any serious dealing of a general character with the land laws by the present parliament, and so far as Scottish disestablishment is concerned he does not conceive that that question has made progress during recent years; and he may state that in making arrangements recently for his expected visit to Midlothian, he had received various overtures for deputations on this subject, which he had been able to put aside.

V

On January 17, along with Mrs. Gladstone, at Charing Cross he said good-bye to many friends, and at Dover to Lord Granville, and the following afternoon he found himself at Cannes, the guest of the Wolvertons at the Château Scott, 'nobly situated, admirably planned, and the kindness exceeded even the beauty and the comfort.' 'Here,' he says, 'we fell in

with the foreign hours, the snack early, déjeuner at noon, dinner at seven, break-up at ten. . . . I am stunned by this wonderful place, and so vast a change at a moment's notice in the conditions of life.' He read steadily through the *Odyssey*, Dixon's *History of the Church of England*, Scherer's *Miscellanies*, and *The Life of Clerk-Maxwell*, and every day he had long talks and walks with Lord Acton on themes personal, political and religious—and we may believe what a restorative he found in communion with that deep and well-filled mind—that 'most satisfactory mind' as Mr. Gladstone here one day calls it. He took drives to gardens that struck him as fairyland. The Prince of Wales paid him kindly attentions as always. He had long conversations with the Comte de Paris, and with M. Clémenceau, and with the Duke of Argyll, the oldest of his surviving friends. In the evening he played whist. Home affairs he kept at bay pretty successfully, though a speech of Lord Hartington's about local government in Ireland drew from him a longish letter to Lord Granville that the reader, if he likes, will find elsewhere.[1] His conversation with M. Clémenceau (whom he found 'decidedly pleasing') was thought indiscreet, but though the most circumspect of men, the buckram of a spurious discretion was no favourite wear with Mr. Gladstone. As for the report of his conversation with the French radical, he wrote to Lord Granville, 'It includes much which Clémenceau did not say to me, and omits much which he did, for our principal conversation was on Egypt, about which he spoke in a most temperate and reasonable manner.' He read the 'harrowing details' of the terrible scene in the court-house at Kilmainham, where the murderous Invincibles were found out. 'About Carey,' he said to Lord Granville, 'the spectacle is indeed loathsome, but I cannot doubt that the Irish government are distinctly *right*. In accepting an approver you do not incite him to do what is in itself wrong; only his own bad mind can make it wrong to him. The government looks for the truth. Approvers are, I suppose, for the most part base, but I do not see how you could act on a distinction of degree between them. Still, one would have heard the hiss from the dock with sympathy.'

Lord Granville wrote to him (Jan. 31, 1883) that the Queen insisted much upon his diminishing the amount of labour thrown upon him, and expressed her opinion that his acceptance of a peerage would relieve him of the heavy strain. Lord Granville told her that personally he should be delighted to see him in the Lords, but that he had great doubts whether Mr. Gladstone would be willing. From Cannes Mr. Gladstone replied (Feb. 3):—

As to removal into the House of Lords, I think the reasons against it of general application are conclusive. At least I cannot see my way in

[1] See Appendix.

regard to them. But at any rate it is obvious that such a step is quite inapplicable to the circumstances created by the present difficulty. It is really most kind of the Queen to testify such an interest, and the question is how to answer her. You would do this better and perhaps more easily than I.

Perhaps he remembered the case of Pulteney and of the Great Commoner.

He was not without remorse at the thought of his colleagues in harness while he was lotus-eating. On the day before the opening of the session he writes, 'I feel dual: I am at Cannes, and in Downing Street eating my parliamentary dinner.' By February 21 he was able to write to Lord Granville:—

As regards my health there is no excuse. It has got better and better as I have stayed on, and is now, I think, on a higher level than for a long time past. My sleep, for example, is now about as good as it can be, and far better than it was during the autumn sittings, *after* which it got so bad. The pleasure I have had in staying does not make an argument at all; it is a mere expression or anticipation of my desire to be turned out to grass for good. . . .

At last the end of the holiday came. 'I part from Cannes with a heavy heart,' he records on February 26:—

Read the *Iliad*, copiously. Off by the 12.30 train. We exchanged bright sun, splendid views, and a little dust at the beginning of our journey, for frost and fog, which however hid no scenery at the end. 27*th*, *Tuesday*.—Reached Paris at 8, and drove to the Embassy, where we had a most kind reception [from Lord Lyons]. Wrote to Lord Granville, Lord Spencer, Sir W. Harcourt. Went with Lord L. to see M. Grévy; also Challemel-Lacour in his most palatial abode. Looked about among the shops; and at the sad face of the Tuileries. An embassy party to dinner; excellent company.

To Lord Granville.

Feb. 27*th*.—I have been with Lord Lyons to see Grévy and Challemel-Lacour. Grévy's conversation consisted of civilities and a mournful lecture on the political history of France, with many compliments to the superiority of England. Challemel thought the burdens of public life intolerable and greater here than in England, which is rather strong. Neither made the smallest allusion to present questions, and it was none of my business to introduce them. . . .

After three days of bookstalls, ivory-hunting, and conversation, by the evening of March 2 the travellers were once more after a bright day and rapid passage safe in Downing Street.

Shortly after their return from the south of France the Gladstones paid a visit to the Prince and Princess of Wales:—

March 30, 1883.—Off at 11.30 to Sandringham. Reception kinder if possible even than heretofore. Wrote. . . . Read and worked on London municipality. 31, *Saturday*.—Wrote. Root-cut a small tree in the forenoon: then measured oaks in the park; one of 30 feet. In the afternoon we drove to Houghton, a stately house and place, but woe-begone.

Conversation with Archbishop of Canterbury, Prince of Wales and others. Read . . . *Life of Hatherley*, Law's account of Craig. *April* 1.—Sandringham church, morning. West Newton, evening. Good services and sermons from the archbishop. The Prince bade me read the lessons. Much conversation with the archbishop, also Duke of Cambridge. Read *Nineteenth Century* on Revised Version; Manning on Education; *Life of Hatherley*; Craig's *Catechism*. Wrote, etc. 2.—Off at 11. D. Street 3.15. Wrote to the Queen. Long conversation with the archbishop in the train.

Here a short letter or two may find a place:—

To Lady Jessel on her husband's death.

March 30.—Though I am reluctant to intrude upon your sorrow still so fresh, and while I beg of you on no account to acknowledge this note, I cannot refrain from writing to assure you not only of my sympathy with your grief, but of my profound sense of the loss which the country and its judiciary have sustained by the death of your distinguished husband. From the time of his first entrance into parliament I followed his legal expositions with an ignorant but fervid admiration, and could not help placing him in the first rank, a rank held by few, of the many able and powerful lawyers whom during half a century I have known and heard in parliament. When I came to know him as a colleague, I found reason to admire no less sincerely his superiority to considerations of pecuniary interest, his strong and tenacious sense of the dignity of his office, and his thoroughly frank, resolute, and manly character. These few words, if they be a feeble, yet I assure you are also a genuine tribute to a memory which I trust will long be cherished. Earnestly anxious that you may have every consolation in your heavy bereavement.

To Cardinal Manning.

April 19.—I thank you much for your kind note, though I am sorry to have given you the trouble of writing it. Both of us have much to be thankful for in the way of health, but I should have hoped that your extremely spare living would have saved you from the action of anything like gouty tendencies. As for myself, I can in no way understand how it is that for a full half century I have been permitted and enabled to resist a pressure of special liabilities attaching to my path of life, to which so many have given way. I am left as a solitary, surviving all his compeers. But I trust it may not be long ere I escape into some position better suited to declining years.

To Sir W. V. Harcourt.

April 27.—A separate line to thank you for your more than kind words about my rather Alexandrine speech last night; as to which I can only admit that it contained one fine passage—six lines in length.[1] Your 'instincts' of kindliness in all personal matters are known to all the world. I should be glad, on selfish grounds, if I could feel sure that they had not a little warped your judicial faculty for the moment. But this misgiving abates nothing from my grateful acknowledgment.

An application was made to him on behalf of a member of

[1] The lines from Lucretius (in his speech on the Affirmation bill). See above, p. 194.

the opposite party for a political pension, and here is his reply, to which it may be added that ten years later he had come rather strongly to the view that political pensions should be abolished, and he was only deterred from trying to carry out his view by the reminder from younger ministers, not themselves applicants nor ever likely to be, that it would hardly be a gracious thing to cut off benefactions at a time when the bestowal of them was passing away from him, though he had used them freely while that bestowal was within his reach.

Political Pensions.

July 4, 1883.—You are probably aware that during the fifty years which have passed since the system of political and civil pensions was essentially remodelled, no political pension has been granted by any minister except to one of those with whom he stood on terms of general confidence and co-operation. It is needless to refer to older practice.

This is not to be accounted for by the fact that after meeting the just claims of political adherents, there has been nothing left to bestow. For, although it has happened that the list of pensions of the first class has usually been full, it has not been so with political pensions of the other classes, which have, I think, rarely if ever been granted to the fullest extent that the Acts have allowed. At the present time, out of twelve pensions which may legally be conferred, only seven have been actually given, if I reckon rightly. I do not think that this state of facts can have been due to the absence of cases entitled to consideration, and I am quite certain that it is not to be accounted for by what are commonly termed party motives. It was obvious to me that I could not create a precedent of deviation from a course undeviatingly pursued by my predecessors of all parties, without satisfying myself that a new form of proceeding would be reasonable and safe. The examination of private circumstances, such as I consider the Act to require, is from its own nature difficult and invidious: but the examination of competing cases in the ex-official corps is a function that could not, I think, be discharged with the necessary combination of free responsible action, and of exemption from offence and suspicion. Such cases plainly may occur.[1]

To H.R.H the Prince of Wales.

August 14*th*.—I am much shocked at an omission which I made last night in failing to ask your royal Highness's leave to be the first to quit Lord Alcester's agreeable party, in order that I might attend to my duties in the House of Commons. In my early days not only did the whole company remain united, if a member of the royal family were present, until the exalted personage had departed; but I well recollect the application of the same rule in the case of the Archbishop (Howley) of Canterbury. I am sorry to say that I reached the House of Commons in time to hear some outrageous speeches from the ultra Irish members. I will not say that they were meant to encourage crime, but they tended

[1] In a party sense, as he told the cabinet, it might be wise enough to grant it, as it would please the public, displease the tories, and widen the breach between the fourth party and their front bench. Mr. Gladstone had suffered an unpleasant experience in another case, of the relations brought about by the refusal of a political pension after inquiry as to the accuracy of the necessary statement as to the applicant's need for it.

directly to teach the Irish people to withhold their confidence from the law and its administrators; and they seemed to exhibit Lord Spencer as the enemy to the mass of the community—a sad and disgraceful fact, though I need not qualify what I told your royal Highness, that they had for some time past not been guilty of obstruction.

Even in pieces that were in their nature more or less official, he touched the occasions of life by a note that was not merely official, or was official in its best form. To Mrs. Garfield he wrote (July 21, 1881):—

You will, I am sure, excuse me, though a personal stranger, for addressing you by letter, to convey to you the assurance of my own feelings and those of my countrymen on the occasion of the late horrible attempt to murder the President of the United States, in a form more palpable at least than that of messages conveyed by telegraph. Those feelings have been feelings in the first instance of sympathy, and afterwards of joy and thankfulness, almost comparable, and I venture to say only second, to the strong emotions of the great nation of which he is the appointed head. Individually I have, let me beg you to believe, had my full share in the sentiments which have possessed the British nation. They have been prompted and quickened largely by what I venture to think is the ever-growing sense of harmony and mutual respect and affection between the two countries, and of a relationship which from year to year becomes more and more a practical bond of union between us. But they have also drawn much of their strength from a cordial admiration of the simple heroism which has marked the personal conduct of the President, for we have not yet wholly lost the capacity of appreciating such an example of Christian faith and manly fortitude. This exemplary picture has been made complete by your own contribution to its noble and touching features, on which I only forbear to dwell because I am directly addressing you.

Under all the conventional solemnities in Mr. Gladstone on such occasions, we are conscious of a sincere feeling that they were in real relation to human life and all its chances and changes.

CHAPTER VII

COLLEAGUES—NORTHERN CRUISE—EGYPT

(*1883*)

*

Parran faville della sua virtute
In non curar d'argento nè d'affanni.

Paradiso, xvii. 83.

Sparks of his worth shall show in the little heed he gives either to riches or to heavy toils.

THE session of 1883 was marked by one legislative performance of the first order, the bill devised against corrupt practices at elections. This invaluable measure was worked through the House of Commons mainly by Sir Henry James, the attorney general, whose skill and temper in a business that was made none the easier by the fact of every man in the House supposing himself to understand the subject, excited Mr. Gladstone's cordial admiration; it strengthened that peculiarly warm regard in which he held Sir Henry, not only now but even when the evil days of political severance came. The prime minister, though assiduous, as he always was, in the discharge of those routine and secondary duties which can never be neglected without damage to the House, had for the first session in his career as head of a government, no burden in the shaping of a great bill. He insisted, in spite of some opposition in the cabinet, on accepting a motion pledging parliament to economy (April 3). In a debate on the Congo, he was taken by some to have gone near to giving up the treaty-making power of the crown. He had to face more than one of those emergencies that were naturally common for the leader of a party with a zealous radical wing represented in his cabinet, and in some measure these occasions beset Mr. Gladstone from 1869 onwards. His loyalty and kindness to colleagues who got themselves and him into scrapes by imprudent speeches, and his activity and resource in inventing ways out of scrapes, were always unfailing. Often the difficulty was with the Queen, sometimes with the House of Lords,

occasionally with the Irish members. Birmingham, for instance, held a grand celebration (June 13) on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Mr. Bright's connection as its representative. Mr. Bright used strong language about 'Irish rebels,' and then learned that he would be called to account. He consulted Mr. Gladstone, and from him received a reply that exhibits the use of logic as applied to inconvenient displays of the sister art of rhetoric :—

To Mr. Bright.

June 15, 1883.—I have received your note, and I am extremely sorry either that you should have personal trouble after your great exertions, or that anything should occur to cloud the brilliancy or mar the satisfaction of your recent celebration in Birmingham. I have looked at the extract from your speech, which is to be alleged as the *corpus delicti*, with a jealous eye. It seems well to be prepared for the worst. The points are, I think, *three* :—1. 'Not a few' tories are guilty of determined obstruction. I cannot conceive it possible that this can be deemed a breach of privilege. 2. These members are found 'in alliance' with the Irish party. Alliance is often predicated by those who disapprove, upon the ground that certain persons have been voting together. This I think can hardly be a breach of privilege even in cases where it may be disputable or untrue.

But then : 3. This Irish party are 'rebels' whose oath of allegiance is broken by association with the enemies of the country. Whether these allegations are true or not, the following questions arise :—(a) Can they be proved ; (b) Are they allegations which would be allowed in debate. I suppose you would agree with me that they cannot be proved ; and I doubt whether they would be allowed in debate. The question whether they are a breach of privilege is for the House ; but the Speaker would have to say, if called upon, whether they were allowable in debate. My impression is that he would say no ; and I think you would not wish to use elsewhere expressions that you could not repeat in the House of Commons.

The Speaker has a jotting in his diary which may end this case of a great man's excess :—

June 18.—Exciting sitting. Bright's language about Irish rebels. Certainly his language was very strong and quite inadmissible if spoken within the House. In conversation with Northcote I deprecated the taking notice of language outside the House, though I could not deny that the House, if it thought fit, might regard the words as a breach of privilege. But Northcote was no doubt urged by his friends.

Mr. Chamberlain's was a heavier business, and led to much correspondence and difficult conversation in high places. A little of it, containing general principles, will probably suffice here :—

To Sir Henry Ponsonby.

June 22.—*Re* Chamberlain's speech. I am sorry to say I had not read the report until I was warned by your letters to Granville and to Hamilton, for my sight does not allow me to read largely the small type

of newspapers. I have now read it, and I must at once say with deep regret. We had done our best to keep the Bright celebration in harmony with the general tone of opinion by the mission which Granville kindly undertook. I am the more sorry about this speech, because Chamberlain has this year in parliament, shown both tact and talent in the management of questions not polemical, such as the bankruptcy bill. The speech is open to exception from three points of view, as I think—first in relation to Bright, secondly in relation to the cabinet, thirdly and most especially in relation to the crown, to which the speech did not indicate the consciousness of his holding any special relation.

June 26.—It appeared to me in considering the case of Mr. Chamberlain's speech that by far the best correction would be found, if a natural opportunity should offer, in a speech differently coloured from himself. I found also that he was engaged to preside on Saturday next at the dinner of the Cobden Club. I addressed myself therefore to this point, and Mr. Chamberlain will revert, on that occasion, to the same line of thought. . . . But, like Granville, I consider that the offence does not consist in holding certain opinions, of which in my judgment the political force and effect are greatly exaggerated, but in the attitude assumed, and the tone and colour given to the speech.

To Lord Granville.

July 1, 1883.—I have read with care Chamberlain's speech of last night [at the Cobden Club dinner]. . . . Am I right or wrong in understanding the speech as follows. He admits without stint that in a cabinet concessions may be made as to action, but he seems to claim an unlimited liberty of speech. Now I should be as far as possible from asserting that under all circumstances speech must be confined within the exact limits to which action is tied down. But I think the dignity and authority, not to say the honour and integrity, of government require that the liberty of speaking beyond those limits should be exercised sparingly, reluctantly, and with much modesty and reserve. Whereas Chamberlain's Birmingham speech exceeded it largely, gratuitously, and with a total absence of recognition of the fact that he was not an individual but a member of a body. And the claim made last night to liberty of speech must be read with the practical illustration afforded by the Birmingham discourse, which evidently now stands as an instance, a sort of moral instance, of the mode in which liberty of speech is to be reconciled with limitation of action.[1]

In order to test the question, must we not bear in mind that the liberty claimed in one wing of a cabinet may also be claimed in another, and that while one minister says I support this measure, though it does not go far enough, another may just as lawfully say I support this measure, though it goes too far? For example, Argyll agreed to the Disturbance Compensation bill in 1880 mainly out of regard to his colleagues and their authority. What if he had used in the House of Lords language like that I have just supposed? Every extravagance of this

[1] By an odd coincidence, on the day after my selection of this letter, I read that the French prime minister, M. Combes, laid down the doctrine that the government is never committed by a minister's individual declarations, but only by those of the head of the government. He alone has the power of making known the direction given to policy, and each minister individually has authority only for the administration of his department (Sept. 25, 1902). Of course this is wholly incompatible with Mr. Gladstone's ideas of parliamentary responsibility and the cabinet system.

kind puts weapons into the hands of opponents, and weakens the authority of government, which is hardly ever too strong, and is often too weak already.

In a letter written some years before when he was leader of the House, Mr. Gladstone on the subject of the internal discipline of a ministerial corps, told one, who was at that time and now his colleague, a little story:—

As the subject is one of interest, perhaps you will let me mention the incident which first obliged me to reflect upon it. Nearly thirty years ago, my leader, Sir R. Peel, agreed in the Irish Tithes bills to give 25 per cent of the tithe to the landlord in return for that 'Commutation.' Thinking this too much (you see that twist was then already in me), I happened to say so in a private letter to an Irish clergyman. Very shortly after I had a note from Peel, which inclosed one from Shaw, his head man in Ireland, complaining of my letter as making his work impossible if such things were allowed to go on. Sir R. Peel indorsed the remonstrance, and I had to sing small. The discipline was very tight in those days (and we were in opposition, not in government). But it worked well on the whole, and I must say it was accompanied on Sir R. Peel's part with a most rigid regard to rights of all kinds within the official or quasi-official corps, which has somewhat declined in more recent times.

A minister had made some reference in a public speech to what happened in the cabinet of which he was a member. 'I am sure it cannot have occurred to you,' Mr. Gladstone wrote, 'that the cabinet is the operative part of the privy council, that the privy councillor's oath is applicable to its proceedings, that this is a very high obligation, and that no one can dispense with it except the Queen. I may add that I believe no one is entitled even to make a note of the proceedings except the prime minister, who has to report its proceedings on every occasion of its meeting to the Queen, and who must by a few scraps assist his memory.'

By the end of the session, although its labours had not been on the level of either 1881 or 1882, Mr. Gladstone was somewhat strained. On Aug. 22 he writes to Mrs. Gladstone at Hawarden:—'Yesterday at 4½ I entered the House hoping to get out soon and write you a letter, when the Speaker told me Northcote was going to raise a debate on the Appropriation bill, and I had to wait, listen, and then to speak for more than an hour, which tired me a good deal, finding me weak after sitting till 2.30 the night before, and a long cabinet in the interval. Rough work for 73!'

II

In September he took a holiday in a shape that, though he was no hearty sailor, was always a pleasure and a relief to him. Three letters to the Queen tell the story, and give a glimpse of court punctilio:—

On the North Sea, Sept. 15. *Posted at Copenhagen, Sept.* 16, 1883.—Mr. Gladstone presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and has to offer his humble apology for not having sought from your Majesty the usual gracious permission before setting foot on a foreign shore. He embarked on the 8th in a steamer of the Castles Company under the auspices of Sir Donald Currie, with no more ambitious expectation than that of a cruise among the Western Isles. But the extraordinary solidity, so to call it, of a very fine ship (the *Pembroke Castle*, 4000 tons, 410 feet long) on the water, rendering her in no small degree independent of weather, encouraged his fellow-voyagers, and even himself, though a most indifferent sailor, to extend their views, and the vessel is now on the North Sea running over to Christiansand in Norway, from whence it is proposed to go to Copenhagen, with the expectation, however, of again touching British soil in the middle of next week. Mr. Gladstone humbly trusts that, under these circumstances, his omission may be excused.

Mr. Tennyson, who is one of the party, is an excellent sailor, and seems to enjoy himself much in the floating castle, as it may be termed in a wider sense than that of its appellation on the register. The weather has been variable with a heavy roll from the Atlantic at the points not sheltered; but the stormy North Sea has on the whole behaved extremely well as regards its two besetting liabilities to storm and fog.

Ship 'Pembroke Castle,' Mouth of the Thames. Sept. 20, 1883.—Mr. Gladstone with his humble duty reports to your Majesty his return this evening from Copenhagen to London. The passage was very rapid, and the weather favourable. He had the honour, with his wife and daughter and other companions of his voyage, to receive an invitation to dine at Fredensborg on Monday. He found there the entire circle of illustrious personages who have been gathered for some time in a family party, with a very few exceptions. The singularly domestic character of this remarkable assemblage, and the affectionate intimacy which appeared to pervade it, made an impression upon him not less deep than the demeanour of all its members, which was so kindly and so simple, that even the word condescending could hardly be applied to it. Nor must Mr. Gladstone allow himself to omit another striking feature of the remarkable picture, in the unrestrained and unbounded happiness of the royal children, nineteen in number, who appeared like a single family reared under a single roof.

[*The royal party, forty in number, visit the ship.*]

The Emperor of Russia proposed the health of your Majesty. Mr. Gladstone by arrangement with your Majesty's minister at this court, Mr. Vivian, proposed the health of the King and Queen of Denmark, and the Emperor and Empress of Russia, and the King and Queen of the Hellenes. The King of Denmark did Mr. Gladstone the honour to propose his health; and Mr. Gladstone in acknowledging this toast, thought he could not do otherwise, though no speeches had been made, than express the friendly feeling of Great Britain towards Denmark, and the satisfaction with which the British people recognised the tie of race which unites them with the inhabitants of the Scandinavian countries. Perhaps the most vigorous and remarkable portion of the British nation had, Mr. Gladstone said, been drawn from these countries. After luncheon, the senior imperial and royal personages crowded together into a small cabin on the deck to hear Mr. Tennyson read two of his poems, several of the younger branches clustering round the doors.

Between 2 and 3, the illustrious party left the *Pembroke Castle*, and in the midst of an animated scene, went on board the King of Denmark's yacht, which steamed towards Elsinore.

Mr. Gladstone was much pleased to observe that the Emperor of Russia appeared to be entirely released from the immediate pressure of his anxieties supposed to weigh much upon his mind. The Empress of Russia has the genial and gracious manners which on this, and on every occasion, mark H.R.H. the Princess of Wales.

Sept. 22, 1883.—Mr. Gladstone presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and has to acknowledge your Majesty's letter of the 20th 'giving him full credit for not having reflected at the time' when he decided, as your Majesty believes, to extend his recent cruise to Norway and Denmark.

He may humbly state that he had no desire or idea beyond a glance, if only for a few hours, at a little of the fine and peculiar scenery of Norway. But he is also responsible for having acquiesced in the proposal (which originated with Mr. Tennyson) to spend a day at Copenhagen, where he happens to have some associations of literary interest; for having accepted an unexpected invitation to dine with the king some thirty miles off; and for having promoted the execution of a wish, again unexpectedly communicated to him, that a visit of the illustrious party to the *Pembroke Castle* should be arranged. Mr. Gladstone ought probably to have foreseen all these things. With respect to the construction put upon his act abroad, Mr. Gladstone ought again, perhaps, to have foreseen that, in countries habituated to more important personal meetings, which are uniformly declared to be held in the interests of general peace, his momentary and unpremeditated contact with the sovereigns at Fredensborg would be denounced, or suspected of a mischievous design. He has, however, some consolation in finding that, in England at least, such a suspicion appears to have been confined to two secondary journals, neither of which has ever found (so far as he is aware) in any act of his anything but guilt and folly.

Thus adopting, to a great extent, your Majesty's view, Mr. Gladstone can confirm your Majesty's belief that (with the exception of a sentence addressed by him to the King of the Hellenes singly respecting Bulgaria), there was on all hands an absolute silence in regard to public affairs. . . .

In proposing at Kirkwall the health of the poet who was his fellow guest on the cruise, Mr. Gladstone let fall a hint—a significant and perhaps a just one—on the comparative place of politics and letters, the difference between the statesman and orator and the poet. 'Mr. Tennyson's life and labour,' he said, 'correspond in point of time as nearly as possible to my own; but he has worked in a higher field, and his work will be more durable. We public men play a part which places us much in view of our countrymen, but the words which we speak have wings and fly away and disappear. . . . But the Poet Laureate has written his own song on the hearts of his countrymen that can never die.'

III

It was said in 1884 that the organization of Egypt was a subject, whether regarded from the English or the European

point of view, that was probably more complicated and more fraught with possible dangers in the future, than any question of foreign policy with which England had had to deal for the last fifty years or more.

The arguments against prolonged English occupation were tolerably clear. It would freeze all cordiality between ourselves and the French. It would make us a Mediterranean military power. In case of war, the necessity of holding Egypt would weaken us. In diplomacy it would expose fresh surface to new and hostile combinations. Yet, giving their full weight to every one of these considerations, a British statesman was confronted by one of those intractable dilemmas that make up the material of a good half of human history. The Khedive could not stand by himself. The Turk would not, and ought not to be endured for his protector. Some other European power would step in and block the English road. Would common prudence in such a case suffer England to acquiesce and stand aside? Did not subsisting obligations also confirm the precepts of policy and self-interest? In many minds this reasoning was clenched and clamped by the sacrifices that England had made when she took, and took alone, the initial military step.

Egyptian affairs were one of the heaviest loads that weighed upon Mr. Gladstone during the whole of 1884. One day in the autumn of this year, towards the end of the business before the cabinet, a minister asked if there was anything else. 'No,' said Mr. Gladstone with sombre irony as he gathered up his papers, 'we have done our Egyptian business, and we are an Egyptian government.' His general position was sketched in a letter to Lord Granville (Mar. 22, 1884):—'In regard to the Egyptian question proper, I am conscious of being moved by three powerful considerations. (1) Respect for European law, and for the peace of eastern Europe, essentially connected with its observance. (2) The just claims of the Khedive, who has given us no case against him, and his people as connected with him. (3) Indisposition to extend the responsibilities of this country. On the first two I feel very stiff. On the third I should have due regard to my personal condition as a vanishing quantity.'

The question of the continuance of the old dual control by England and France was raised almost immediately after the English occupation began, but English opinion supported or stimulated the cabinet in refusing to restore a form of co-operation that had worked well originally in the hands of Baring and de Blignières, but had subsequently betrayed its inherent weakness. France resumed what is diplomatically styled liberty of action in Egypt; and many months were passed in negotiations, the most entangled in which a British government was ever engaged. Why did not England, im-

patient critics of Mr. Gladstone and his cabinet inquire, at once formally proclaim a protectorate? Because it would have been a direct breach of her moral obligations of good faith to Europe. These were undisputed and indisputable. It would have brought her within instant reach of a possible war with France, for which the sinister and interested approval of Germany would have been small compensation.

The issue lay between annexation and withdrawal,—annexation to be veiled and indirect, withdrawal to be cautious and conditional. No member of the cabinet at this time seems to have listened with any favour whatever to the mention of annexation. Apart from other objections, it would undeniably have been a flagrant breach of solemn international engagements. The cabinet was pledged up to the lips to withdrawal, and when Lord Hartington talked to the House of Commons of the last British soldier quitting Egypt in a few months, nobody ever doubted then or since that he was declaring the sincere intention of the cabinet. Nor was any doubt possible that the intention of the cabinet entirely coincided at that time with the opinion and wishes of the general public. The operations in Egypt had not been popular,[1] and the national temper was still as hostile to all expansion as when it cast out Lord Beaconsfield. Withdrawal, however, was beset with inextricable difficulties. Either withdrawal or annexation would have simplified the position and brought its own advantages. Neither was possible. The British government after Tel-el-Kebir vainly strove to steer a course that would combine the advantages of both. Say what they would, military occupation was taken to make them responsible for everything that happened in Egypt. This encouraged the view that they should give orders to Egypt, and make Egypt obey. But then direct and continuous interference with the Egyptian administration was advance in a path that could only end in annexation. To govern Egypt from London through a native ministry, was in fact nothing but annexation, and annexation in its clumsiest and most troublesome shape. Such a policy was least of all to be reconciled with the avowed policy of withdrawal. To treat native ministers as mere ciphers and puppets, and then to hope to leave them at the end with authority enough to govern the country by themselves, was pure delusion.

So much for our relations with Egypt internally. Then came Europe and the Powers, and the regulation of a financial situation of indescribable complexity. 'I sometimes fear,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville (Dec. 8, 1884) 'that some of the foreign governments have the same notion of me that Nicholas was supposed to have of Lord Aberdeen. But there is

[1] Many indications of this could be cited, if there were room. A parade of the victors of Tel-el-Kebir through the streets of London stirred little excitement. Two ministers went to make speeches at Liverpool, and had to report on returning to town that references to Egypt fell altogether flat.

no one in the cabinet less disposed than I am to knuckle down to them in this Egyptian matter, about which they, except Italy, behave so ill, some of them without excuse.' 'As to Bismarck,' he said, 'it is a case of sheer audacity, of which he has an unbounded stock.' Two months before he had complained to Lord Granville of the same powerful personage:—'Ought not some notice to be taken of Bismarck's impudent reference to the English exchequer? Ought you to have such a remark in your possession without protest? He coolly assumes in effect that we are responsible for all the financial wants and occasions of Egypt.'

The sensible reader would resist any attempt to drag him into the Serbonian bog of Egyptian finance. Nor need I describe either the protracted conference of the European Powers, or the mission of Lord Northbrook. To this able colleague, Mr. Gladstone wrote on the eve of his departure (Aug. 29, 1884):—

> I cannot let you quit our shores without a word of valediction. Your colleagues are too deeply interested to be impartial judges of your mission. But they certainly cannot be mistaken in their appreciation of the generosity and courage which could alone have induced you to undertake it. Our task in Egypt generally may not unfairly be called an impossible task, and with the impossible no man can successfully contend. But we are well satisfied that whatever is possible, you will achieve; whatever judgment, experience, firmness, gentleness can do, will be done. Our expectations from the nature of the case must be moderate; but be assured they will not be the measure of our gratitude. All good go with you.

Lord Northbrook's report when in due time it came, engaged the prime minister's anxious consideration, but it could not be carried further. What the Powers might agree to, parliament would not look at. The situation was one of the utmost delicacy and danger, as anybody who is aware of the diplomatic embarrassments of it knows. An agreement with France about the Suez Canal came to nothing. A conference upon finance came to nothing. Bismarck was out of humour with England, partly from his dislike of certain exalted English personages and influences at his own court, partly because it suited him that France and England should be bad friends, partly because, as he complained, whenever he tried to found a colony, we closed in upon him. He preached a sermon on *do ut des*, and while scouting the idea of any real differences with this country, he hinted that if we could not accommodate him in colonial questions, he might not find it in his power to accommodate us in European questions. Mr. Gladstone declared for treating every German claim in an equitable spirit, but said we had our own colonial communities to consider.

In March 1885, after negotiations that threatened to be endless the London Convention was signed and the riddle of

the financial sphinx was solved. This made possible the coming years of beneficent reform. The wonder is, says a competent observer, how in view of the indifference of most of the Powers to the welfare of Egypt and the bitter annoyance of France at our position in that country, the English government ever succeeded in inducing all the parties concerned to agree to so reasonable an arrangement.[1]

Meanwhile, as we shall see all too soon, the question of Egypt proper as it was then called, had brought up the question of the Soudan, and with it an incident that made what Mr. Gladstone called 'the blackest day since the Phœnix Park.' In 1884 the government still seemed prosperous. The ordinary human tendency to croak never dies, especially in the politics of party. Men talked of humiliation abroad, ruin at home, agricultural interests doomed, trade at a standstill—calamities all obviously due to a government without spirit, and a majority with no independence. But then humiliation, to be sure, only meant jealousy in other countries because we declined to put ourselves in the wrong, and to be hoodwinked into unwise alliances. Ruin only meant reform without revolution. Doom meant an inappreciable falling off in the vast volume of our trade.

[1] Milner's *England in Egypt*, p. 185.

CHAPTER VIII

REFORM

(*1884*)

Decision by majorities is as much an expedient as lighting by gas. In adopting it as a rule, we are not realising perfection, but bowing to an imperfection. It has the great merit of avoiding, and that by a test perfectly definite, the last resort to violence; and of making force itself the servant instead of the master of authority. But our country rejoices in the belief that she does not decide all things by majorities. —GLADSTONE (1858).

'THE word procedure,' said Mr. Gladstone to a club of young political missionaries in 1884, 'has in it something homely, and it is difficult for any one, except those who pass their lives within the walls of parliament, to understand how vital and urgent a truth it is, that there is no more urgent demand, there is no aim or purpose more absolutely essential to the future victories and the future efficiency of the House of Commons, than that it should effect, with the support of the nation—for it can be effected in no other way—some great reform in the matter of its procedure.' He spoke further of the 'absolute and daily-growing necessity of what I will describe as a great internal reform of the House of Commons, quite distinct from that reform beyond its doors on which our hearts are at present especially set.' Reform from within and reform from without were the two tasks, neither of them other than difficult in itself and both made supremely difficult by the extraordinary spirit of faction at that time animating the minority. The internal reform had been made necessary, as Mr. Gladstone expressed it, by systematised obstruction, based upon the abuse of ancient and generous rules, under which system the House of Commons 'becomes more and more the slave of some of the poorest and most insignificant among its members.' Forty years before he told the provost of Oriel, 'The forms of parliament are little more than a mature expression of the principles of justice in their application to the proceedings of deliberative bodies, having it for their object to secure freedom and reflection, and well fitted to attain that object.' These high ideals had been gradually lowered, for Mr. Parnell had found out that the rules

which had for their object the security of freedom and reflection, could be still more effectually wrested to objects the very opposite.

In Mr. Gladstone's first session (1833) 395 members (the speaker excluded) spoke, and the total number of speeches was 5765. Fifty years later, in the session of 1883, the total number of speeches had risen to 21,160. The remedies proposed from time to time in this parliament by Mr. Gladstone were various, and were the occasion of many fierce and stubborn conflicts. But the subject is in the highest degree technical, and only intelligible to those who, as Mr. Gladstone said, 'pass their lives within the walls of parliament'—perhaps not by any means to all even of them. His papers contain nothing of interest or novelty upon the question either of devolution or of the compulsory stoppage of debate. We may as well, therefore, leave it alone, only observing that the necessity for the closure was probably the most unpalatable of all the changes forced on Mr. Gladstone by change in social and political circumstance. To leave the subject alone is not to ignore its extreme importance, either in the effect of revolution in procedure upon the character of the House, and its power of despatching and controlling national business; or as an indication that the old order was yielding in the political sphere as everywhere else to the conditions of a new time.

II

The question of extending to householders in the country the franchise that in 1867 had been conferred on householders in boroughs, had been first pressed with eloquence and resolution by Mr. Trevelyan. In 1876 he introduced two resolutions, one for extended franchise, the other for a new arrangement of seats, made necessary by the creation of the new voters. In a tory parliament he had, of course, no chance. Mr. Gladstone, not naturally any more ardent for change in political machinery than Burke or Canning had been, was in no hurry about it, but was well aware that the triumphant parliament of 1880 could not be allowed to expire without the effective adoption by the government of proposals in principle such as those made by Mr. Trevelyan in 1876. One wing of the cabinet hung back. Mr. Gladstone himself, reading the signs in the political skies, felt that the hour had struck; the cabinet followed, and the bill was framed. Never, said Mr. Gladstone, was a bill so large in respect of the numbers to have votes; so innocent in point of principle, for it raised no new questions and sprang from no new principles. It went, he contended and most truly contended, to the extreme of consideration for opponents, and avoided several points that had especial attractions for friends. So likewise, the general principles on which redistribution of

seats would be governed, were admittedly framed in a conservative spirit.

The comparative magnitude of the operation was thus described by Mr. Gladstone (Feb. 28, 1884):—

In 1832 there was passed what was considered a Magna Charta of British liberties; but that Magna Charta of British liberties added, according to the previous estimate of Lord John Russell, 500,000, while according to the results considerably less than 500,000 were added to the entire constituency of the three countries. After 1832 we come to 1866. At that time the total constituency of the United Kingdom reached 1,364,000. By the bills which were passed between 1867 and 1869 that number was raised to 2,448,000. Under the action of the present law the constituency has reached in round numbers what I would call 3,000,000. This bill, if it passes as presented, will add to the English constituency over 1,300,000 persons. It will add to the Scotch constituency, Scotland being at present rather better provided in this respect than either of the other countries, over 200,000, and to the Irish constituency over 400,000; or in the main, to the present aggregate constituency of the United Kingdom taken at 3,000,000 it will add 2,000,000 more, nearly twice as much as was added since 1867, and more than four times as much as was added in 1832.

The bill was read a second time (April 7) by the overwhelming majority of 340 against 210. Even those who most disliked the measure admitted that a majority of this size could not be made light of, though they went on in charity to say that it did not represent the honest opinion of those who composed it. It was in fact, as such persons argued, the strongest proof of the degradation brought into our politics by the Act of 1867. 'All the bribes of Danby or of Walpole or of Pelham,' cried one excited critic, 'all the bullying of the Tudors, all the lobbying of George III., would have been powerless to secure it in the most corrupt or the most servile days of the ancient House of Commons.'[1]

On the third reading the opposition disappeared from the House, and on Mr. Gladstone's prompt initiative it was placed on record in the journals that the bill had been carried by a unanimous verdict. It went to the Lords, and by a majority, first of 59 and then of 50, they put what Mr. Gladstone mildly called 'an effectual stoppage on the bill, or in other words did practically reject it.' The plain issue, if we can call it plain, was this. What the tories, with different degrees of sincerity, professed to dread was that the election might take place on the new franchise, but with an unaltered disposition of parliamentary seats. At heart the bulk of them were as little friendly to a lowered franchise in the counties, as they had been in the case of the towns before Mr. Disraeli educated them. But this was a secret dangerous to let out, for the enfranchised workers in the towns would never understand why workers in the villages should not have a vote. Apart

[1] *Saturday Review*, April 12, 1884.

from this, the tory leaders believed that unless the allotment of seats went with the addition of a couple of million new voters, the prospect would be ruinously unfavourable to their party, and they offered determined resistance to the chance of a jockeying operation of this kind. At least one very eminent man among them had privately made up his mind that the proceeding supposed to be designed by their opponents—their distinct professions notwithstanding—would efface the tory party for thirty years to come. Mr. Gladstone and his government on the other hand agreed, on grounds of their own and for reasons of their own, that the two changes should come into operation together. What they contended was, that to tack redistribution on to franchise, was to scotch or kill franchise. 'I do not hesitate to say,' Mr. Gladstone told his electors, 'that those who are opposing us, and making use of this topic of redistribution of seats as a means for defeating the franchise bill, know as well as we do that, had we been such idiots and such dolts as to present to parliament a bill for the combined purpose, or to bring in two bills for the two purposes as one measure—I say, they know as well as we do, that a disgraceful failure would have been the result of our folly, and that we should have been traitors to you, and to the cause we had in hand.'[1] Disinterested onlookers thought there ought to be no great difficulty in securing the result that both sides desired. As the Duke of Argyll put it to Mr. Gladstone, if in private business two men were to come to a breach, when standing so near to one another in aim and profession, they would be shut up in bedlam. This is just what the judicious reader will think to-day.

The controversy was transported from parliament to the platform, and a vigorous agitation marked the autumn recess. It was a double agitation. What began as a campaign on behalf of the rural householder, threatened to end as one against hereditary legislators. It is a well-known advantage in movements of this sort to be not only for, but also against, somebody or something; against a minister, by preference, or if not an individual, then against a body. A hereditary legislature in a community that has reached the self-governing stage is an anachronism that makes the easiest of all marks for mockery and attack, so long as it lasts. Nobody can doubt that if Mr. Gladstone had been the frantic demagogue or fretful revolutionist that his opponents thought, he now had an excellent chance of bringing the question of the House of Lords irresistibly to the front. As it was, in the midst of the storm raised by his lieutenants and supporters all over the country, he was the moderating force, elaborately appealing, as he said, to the reason rather than the fears of his opponents.

One reproachful passage in his speeches this autumn acquires

[1] Edinburgh, August 30, 1884.

a rather peculiar significance in the light of the events that were in the coming years to follow. He is dealing with the argument that the hereditary House protects the nation against fleeting opinions :—

How is it with regard to the solid and permanent opinion of the nation? We have had twelve parliaments since the Reform Act,—I have a right to say so, as I have sat in every one of them,—and the opinion, the national opinion, has been exhibited in the following manner. Ten of those parliaments have had a liberal majority. The eleventh parliament was the one that sat from 1841 to 1847. It was elected as a tory parliament; but in 1846 it put out the conservative government of Sir Robert Peel, and put in and supported till its dissolution, the liberal government of Lord John Russell. That is the eleventh parliament. But then there is the twelfth parliament, and that is one that you and I know a good deal about [Lord Beaconsfield's parliament], for we talked largely on the subject of its merits and demerits, whichever they may be, at the time of the last election. That parliament was, I admit, a tory parliament from the beginning to the end. But I want to know, looking back for a period of more than fifty years, which represented the solid permanent conviction of the nation? —the ten parliaments that were elected upon ten out of the twelve dissolutions, or the one parliament that chanced to be elected from the disorganized state of the liberal party in the early part of the year 1874? Well, here are ten parliaments on the one side; here is one parliament on the other side. . . . The House of Lords was in sympathy with the one parliament, and was in opposition . . . to the ten parliaments. And yet you are told, when,—we will say for forty-five years out of fifty—practically the nation has manifested its liberal tendencies by the election of liberal parliaments, and once only has chanced to elect a thoroughly tory parliament, you are told that it is the thoroughly tory parliament that represents the solid and permanent opinion of the country. [1]

In time a curious thing, not yet adequately explained, fell out, for the extension of the franchise in 1867 and now in 1884, resulted in a reversal of the apparent law of things that had ruled our political parties through the epoch that Mr. Gladstone has just sketched. The five parliaments since 1884 have not followed the line of the ten parliaments preceding, notwithstanding the enlargement of direct popular power.

III

In August Mr. Gladstone submitted to the Queen a memorandum on the political situation. It was much more elaborate than the ordinary official submissions. Lord Granville was the only colleague who had seen it, and Mr. Gladstone was alone responsible for laying it before the sovereign. It is a masterly statement of the case, starting from the assumption for the sake of argument that the tories were right and the liberals wrong as to the two bills; then proceeding on the basis of a strongly expressed desire to keep back a movement for organic change; next urging the signs that such a movement would go forward

[1] Corn Exchange, Edinburgh, August 30, 1884.

with irresistible force if the bill were again rejected; and concluding thus:—

I may say in conclusion that there is no personal act if it be compatible with personal honour and likely to contribute to an end which I hold very dear, that I would not gladly do for the purpose of helping to close the present controversy, and in closing it to prevent the growth of one probably more complex and more formidable.

This document, tempered, unrhetorical, almost dispassionate, was the starting-point of proceedings that, after enormous difficulties had been surmounted by patience and perseverance, working through his power in parliament and his authority in the country, ended in final pacification and a sound political settlement. It was Mr. Gladstone's statesmanship that brought this pacification into sight and within reach.

The Queen was deeply struck both by the force of his arguments and the earnest tone in which they were pressed. Though doubting whether there was any strong desire for a change in the position of the House of Lords, still she 'did not shut her eyes to the possible gravity of the situation' (Aug. 31). She seemed inclined to take some steps for ascertaining the opinion of the leaders of opposition, with a view to inducing them to modify their programme. The Duke of Richmond visited Balmoral (Sept. 13), but when Mr. Gladstone, then himself on Deeside, heard what had passed in the direction of compromise, he could only say, 'Waste of breath!' To all suggestions of a dissolution on the case in issue, Mr. Gladstone said to a confidential emissary from Balmoral:—

Never will I be a party to dissolving in order to determine whether the Lords or the Commons were right upon the Franchise bill. If I have anything to do with dissolution, it will be a dissolution upon organic change in the House of Lords. Should this bill be again rejected in a definite manner, there will be only two courses open to me, one to cut out of public life, which I shall infinitely prefer; the other to become a supporter of organic change in the House of Lords, which I hate and which I am making all this fuss in order to avoid. We have a few weeks before us to try and avert the mischief. After a second rejection it will be too late. There is perhaps the alternative of advising a large creation of peers; but to this there are great objections, even if the Queen were willing. I am not at present sure that I could bring myself to be a party to the adoption of a plan like that of 1832.

When people talked to him of dissolution as a means of bringing the Lords to account, he replied in scorn:—'A marvellous conception! On such a dissolution, if the country disapproved of the conduct of its representatives, it would cashier them; but, if it disapproved of the conduct of the peers, it would simply have to see them resume their place of power, to employ it to the best of their ability as opportunity might serve, in thwarting the desires of the country expressed through its representatives.'

It was reported to Mr. Gladstone that his speeches in Scotland (though they were marked by much restraint) created some displeasure at Balmoral. He wrote to Lord Granville (Sept. 26) :—

The Queen does not know the facts. If she did, she would have known that while I have been compelled to deviate from the intention of speaking only to constituents which (with much difficulty) I kept until Aberdeen, I have thereby (and again with much difficulty in handling the audiences, every one of which would have wished a different course of proceeding) been enabled to do much in the way of keeping the question of organic change in the House of Lords out of the present stage of the controversy.

Sir Henry Ponsonby, of course at the Queen's instigation, was indefatigable and infinitely ingenious in inventing devices of possible compromise between Lords and Commons, or between Lords and ministers, such as might secure the passing of franchise, and yet at the same time secure the creation of new electoral areas before the extended franchise should become operative. The Queen repeated to some members of the opposition—she did not at this stage communicate directly with Lord Salisbury—the essence of Mr. Gladstone's memorandum of August, and no doubt conveyed the impression that it had made upon her own mind. Later correspondence between her secretary and the Duke of Richmond set up a salutary ferment in what had not been at first a very promising quarter.

Meanwhile Mr. Gladstone was hard at work in other directions. He was urgent (Oct. 2) that Lord Granville should make every effort to bring more peers into the fold to save the bill when it reappeared in the autumn session. He had himself 'garnered in a rich harvest,' of bishops in July. On previous occasions he had plied the episcopal bench with political appeals, and this time he wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury :—

July 2, 1884.—I should have felt repugnance and scruple about addressing your Grace at any time on any subject of a political nature, if it were confined within the ordinary limits of such subjects. But it seems impossible to refuse credit to the accounts, which assure us that the peers of the opposition, under Lord Salisbury and his coadjutors, are determined to use all their strength and influence for the purpose of throwing out the Franchise bill in the House of Lords; and thus of entering upon a conflict with the House of Commons, from which at each step in the proceeding it may probably become more difficult to retire, and which, if left to its natural course, will probably develop itself into a constitutional crisis of such an order, as has not occurred since 1832. . . .

To Tennyson, the possessor of a spiritual power even more than archiepiscopal, who had now a place among peers temporal, he addressed a remonstrance (July 6) :—

. . . Upon consideration I cannot help writing a line, for I must hope

you will reconsider your intention. The best mode in which I can support a suggestion seemingly so audacious is by informing you, that all sober-minded conservative peers are in great dismay at this wild proceeding of Lord Salisbury; that the ultra-radicals and Parnellites, on the other hand, are in a state of glee, as they believe, and with good reason, that the battle once begun will end in some great humiliation to the House of Lords, or some important change in its composition. That (to my knowledge) various bishops of conservative leanings are, on this account, going to vote with the government—as may be the case with lay peers also. That you are the *only* peer, so far as I know, associated with liberal ideas or the liberal party, who hesitates to vote against Lord Salisbury.

In the later stage of this controversy, Tennyson shot the well-known lines at him—

> Steersman, be not precipitate in thine act
> Of steering, for the river here, my friend,
> Parts in two channels, moving to one end—
> This goes straight forward to the cataract:
> That streams about the bend.
> But tho' the cataract seems the nearer way,
> Whate'er the crowd on either bank may say,
> Take thou "the bend," 'twill save thee many a day.

To a poet who made to his generation such exquisite gifts of beauty and pleasure, the hardest of party-men may pardon unseasonable fears about franchise and one-horse constituencies. As matter of fact and in plain prose, this taking of the bend was exactly what the steersman had been doing, so as to keep other people out of cataracts.

'Then why should not Lord Granville try his hand on ambassadors, pressing them to save their order from a tempest that must strain, and might wreck it?' To Mr. Chamberlain, who was in his element, or in one of his elements, Mr. Gladstone wrote (Oct. 8):—

I see that Salisbury by his declaration in the *Times* of Saturday, that the Lords are to contend for the simultaneous passing of the two bills, has given you an excellent subject for denunciation, and you may safely denounce him to your heart's content. But I earnestly hope that you will leave us all elbow room on other questions which *may* arise. If you have seen my letters (virtually) to the Queen, I do not think you will have found reason for alarm in them. I am sorry that Hartington the other day used the word compromise, a word which has never passed my lips, though I believe he meant nothing wrong. If we could find anything which, though surrendering nothing substantial, would build a bridge for honourable and moderate men to retreat by, I am sure you would not object to it. But I have a much stronger plea for your reserve than any request of my own. It is this, that the cabinet has postponed discussing the matter until Wednesday simply in order that you may be present and take your share. They meet at twelve. I shall venture to count on your doing nothing to narrow the ground left open to us, which is indeed but a stinted one.

Three days later (Oct. 11) the Queen writing to the prime minister was able to mark a further stage :—

Although the strong expressions used by ministers in their recent speeches have made the task of conciliation undertaken by the Queen a most difficult one, she is so much impressed with the importance of the issue at stake, that she has persevered in her endeavours, and has obtained from the leaders of the opposition an expression of their readiness to negotiate on the basis of Lord Hartington's speech at Hanley. In the hope that this *may* lead to a compromise, the Queen has suggested that Lord Hartington may enter into communication with Lord Salisbury, and she trusts, from Mr. Gladstone's telegram received this morning, that he will empower Lord Hartington to discuss the possibility of an agreement with Lord Salisbury.

In acknowledgment, Mr. Gladstone offered his thanks for all her Majesty's 'well-timed efforts to bring about an accommodation.' He could not, however, he proceeded, feel sanguine as to obtaining any concession from the leaders, but he is very glad that Lord Hartington should try.

Happily, and as might have been expected by anybody who remembered the action of the sensible peers who saved the Reform bill in 1832, the rash and headstrong men in high places in the tory party were not allowed to have their own way. Before the autumn was over, prudent members of the opposition became uneasy. They knew that in substance the conclusion was foregone, but they knew also that just as in their own body there was a division between hothead and moderate, so in the cabinet they could count upon a whig section, and probably upon the prime minister as well. They noted his words spoken in July, 'It is not our desire to see the bill carried by storm and tempest. It is our desire to see it win its way by persuasion and calm discussion to the rational minds of men.'[1]

Meanwhile Sir Michael Hicks Beach had already, with the knowledge and without the disapproval of other leading men on the tory side, suggested an exchange of views to Lord Hartington, who was warmly encouraged by the cabinet to carry on communications, as being a person peculiarly fitted for the task, 'enjoying full confidence on one side,' as Mr. Gladstone said to the Queen, 'and probably more on the other side than any other minister could enjoy.' These two cool and able men took the extension of county franchise for granted, and their conferences turned pretty exclusively on redistribution. Sir Michael pressed the separation of urban from rural areas, and what was more specifically important was his advocacy of single-member or one-horse constituencies. His own long experience of a scattered agricultural division had convinced him that such areas with household suffrage would be unworkable. Lord Hartington knew the advantage

[1] Dinner of the Eighty Club, July 11, 1884.

of two-member constituencies for his party, because they made an opening for one whig candidate and one radical. But he did not make this a question of life or death, and the ground was thoroughly well hoed and raked. Lord Salisbury, to whom the nature of these communications had been made known by the colleague concerned, told him of the suggestion from the Queen, and said that he and Sir Stafford Northcote had unreservedly accepted it. So far the cabinet had found the several views in favour with their opponents as to electoral areas, rather more sweeping and radical than their own had been, and they hoped that on the basis thus informally laid, they might proceed to the more developed conversation with the two official leaders. Then the tory ultras interposed.

IV

On the last day of October the Queen wrote to Mr. Gladstone from Balmoral :—

The Queen thinks that it would be a means of arriving at some understanding if the leaders of the parties in both Houses could exchange their views personally. The Duke of Argyll or any other person unconnected for the present with the government or the opposition might be employed in bringing about a meeting, and in assisting to solve difficulties. The Queen thinks the government should in any project forming the basis of resolutions on redistribution to be proposed to the House, distinctly define their plans at such a personal conference. The Queen believes that were assurance given that the redistribution would not be wholly inimical to the prospects of the conservative party, their concurrence might be obtained. The Queen feels most strongly that it is of the utmost importance that in this serious crisis such means, even if unusual, should be tried, and knowing how fully Mr. Gladstone recognises the great danger that might arise by prolonging the conflict, the Queen *earnestly* trusts that he will avail himself of such means to obviate it.

The Queen then wrote to Lord Salisbury in the same sense in which she had written to the prime minister. Lord Salisbury replied that it would give him great pleasure to consult with anybody the Queen might desire, and that in obedience to her commands he would do all that lay in him to bring the controversy finally to a just and honourable issue. He went on however to say, in the caustic vein that was one of his ruling traits, that while cheerfully complying with the Queen's wishes, he thought it right to add that, so far as his information went, no danger attached to the prolongation of the controversy for a considerable time, nor did he believe that there was any real excitement in the country about it. The Queen in replying (Nov. 5), said that she would at once acquaint Mr. Gladstone with what he had said.

The autumn session began, and the Franchise bill was introduced again. Three days later, in consequence of a communication from the other camp, the debate on the second reading

was conciliatory, but the tories won a bye-election, and the proceedings in committee became menacing and clouded. Discrepancies abounded in the views of the opposition upon redistribution. When the third reading came (Nov. 11), important men on the tory side insisted on the production of a Seats bill, and declared there must be no communication with the enemy. Mr. Gladstone was elaborately pacific. If he could not get peace, he said, at least let it be recorded that he desired peace. The parleys of Lord Hartington and Sir Michael Hicks Beach came to end.

Mr. Gladstone late one night soon after this (Nov. 14), had a long conversation with Sir Stafford Northcote at the house of a friend. He had the authority of the cabinet (not given for this special interview) to promise the introduction of a Seats bill before the committee stage of the Franchise bill in the Lords, provided he was assured that it could be done without endangering or retarding franchise. Northcote and Mr. Gladstone made good progress on the principles of redistribution. Then came an awkward message from Lord Salisbury that the Lords could not let the Franchise bill through, until they got the Seats bill from the Commons. So negotiations were again broken off.

The only hope now was that a sufficient number of Lord Salisbury's adherents would leave him in the lurch, if he did not close with what was understood to be Mr. Gladstone's engagement, to procure and press a seats bill as soon as ever franchise was out of danger. So it happened, and the door that had thus been shut, speedily opened. Indirect communication reached the treasury bench that seemed to show the leaders of opposition to be again alive. There were many surmises, everybody was excited, and two great tory leaders in the Lords called on Lord Granville one day, anxious for a *modus vivendi*. Mr. Gladstone in the Commons, in conformity with a previous decision of the cabinet, declared the willingness of the government to produce a bill or explain its provisions, on receiving a reasonable guarantee that the Franchise bill would be passed before the end of the sittings. The ultras of the opposition still insisted on making bets all round that the Franchise bill would not become law; besides betting, they declared they would die on the floor of the House in resisting an accommodation. A meeting of the party was summoned at the Carlton club for the purpose of declaring war to the knife, and Lord Salisbury was reported to hold to his determination. This resolve, however, proved to have been shaken by Mr. Gladstone's language on a previous day. The general principles of redistribution had been sufficiently sifted, tested, and compared to show that there was no insuperable discrepancy of view. It was made clear to Lord Salisbury circuitously, that though the government required adequate assurances of the safety of franchise before presenting their scheme upon seats,

this did not preclude private and confidential illumination. So the bill was read a second time.

All went prosperously forward. On November 19, Lord Salisbury and Sir S. Northcote came to Downing Street in the afternoon, took tea with the prime minister, and had a friendly conversation for an hour in which much ground was covered. The heads of the government scheme were discussed and handed to the opposition leaders. Mr. Gladstone was well satisfied. He was much struck, he said after, with the quickness of the tory leader, and found it a pleasure to deal with so acute a man. Lord Salisbury, for his part, was interested in the novelty of the proceeding, for no precedent could be found in our political or party history for the discussion of a measure before its introduction between the leaders of the two sides. This novelty stirred his curiosity, while he also kept a sharp eye on the main party chance. He proved to be entirely devoid of respect for tradition, and Mr. Gladstone declared himself to be a strong conservative in comparison. The meetings went on for several days through the various parts of the questions, Lord Hartington, Lord Granville, and Sir Charles Dilke being also taken into council—the last of the three being unrivalled master of the intricate details.

The operation was watched with jealous eyes by the radicals, though they had their guardians in the cabinet. To Mr. Bright who, having been all his life denounced as a violent republican, was now in the view of the new school hardly even so much as a sound radical, Mr. Gladstone thought it well to write (Nov. 25) words of comfort, if comfort were needed :—

> I wish to give you the assurance that in the private communications which are now going on, liberal principles such as we should conceive and term them, are in no danger. Those with whom we confer are thinking without doubt of party interests, as affected by this or that arrangement, but these are a distinct matter, and I am not so good at them as some others; but the general proposition which I have stated is I think one which I can pronounce with some confidence. . . . The whole operation is essentially delicate and slippery, and I can hardly conceive any other circumstance in which it would be justified, but in the present very peculiar case I think it is not only warranted, but called for.

On November 27 all was well over; and Mr. Gladstone was able to inform the Queen that 'the delicate and novel communications' between the two sets of leaders had been brought to a happy termination. 'His first duty,' he said, 'was to tender his grateful thanks to your Majesty for the wise, gracious, and steady influence on your Majesty's part, which has so powerfully contributed to bring about this accommodation, and to avert a serious crisis of affairs.' He adds that 'his cordial acknowledgments are due to Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote for the manner in which they have conducted their difficult communications.' The Queen promptly replied :—'I gladly and

thankfully return your telegrams. To be able to be of use is all I care to live for now.' By way of winding up negotiations so remarkable, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Salisbury to thank him for his kindness, and to say that he could have desired nothing better in candour and equity. Their conversation on the Seats bill would leave him none but the most agreeable recollections.

The Queen was in high good humour, as she had a right to be. She gave Mr. Gladstone ample credit for his conciliatory spirit. The last two months had been very trying to her, she said, but she confessed herself repaid by the thought that she had assisted in a settlement. Mr. Gladstone's severest critics on the tory side confessed that 'they did not think he had it in him.' Some friends of his in high places even suggested that this would be a good moment for giving him the garter. He wrote to Sir Arthur Gordon (Dec. 5) :—'The time of this government has been on the whole the most stormy and difficult that I have known in office, and the last six weeks have been perhaps the most anxious and difficult of the government.'

V

One further episode deserves a section, if the reader will turn back for a moment or two. The question whether the extension of the parliamentary franchise to rural householders should be limited to Great Britain or should apply to the whole kingdom, had been finally discussed in a couple of morning sittings in the month of May. Nobody who heard it can forget the speech made against Irish inclusion by Mr. Plunket, the eloquent grandson of the most eloquent of all the orators whom Ireland has sent to the imperial senate. He warned the House that to talk of assimilating the franchise in Ireland to the franchise in England, was to use language without meaning; that out of seven hundred and sixty thousand inhabited houses in Ireland, no fewer than four hundred and thirty five thousand were rated at one pound and under; that those whom the bill would enfranchise would be taken from a class of whom more than forty per cent. could neither read nor write; that the measure would strengthen the hands of that disloyal party who boasted of their entire indifference to English opinion, and their undivided obligation to influences which Englishmen were wholly unable to realise. Then in a lofty strain Mr. Plunket foretold that the measure which they were asked to pass would lead up to, and would precipitate, the establishment of a separate Irish nationality. He reminded his hearers that the empire had been reared not more by the endurance of its soldiers and sailors than by the sagacity and firmness, the common sense and patriotism of that ancient parliament; and he ended with a fervid prayer that the historian of the future might not have to tell that the union of these three kingdoms on which rested

all its honour and all its power—a union that could never be broken by the force of domestic traitor or foreign foe—yielded at last under the pressure of the political ambitions and party exigencies of British statesmen.

The orator's stately diction, his solemn tone, the depth of his conviction, made a profound impression. Newer parliamentary hands below the government gangway, as he went on, asked one another by what arts of parliamentary defence the veteran minister could possibly deal with this searching appeal. Only a quarter of an hour remained. In two or three minutes Mr. Gladstone had swept the solemn impression entirely away. Contrary to his wont, he began at once upon the top note. With high passion in his voice, and mastering gesture in his uplifted arm, he dashed impetuously upon the foe. What weighs upon my mind is this, he said, that when the future historian speaks of the greatness of this empire, and traces the manner in which it has grown through successive generations, he will say that in that history there was one chapter of disgrace, and that chapter of disgrace was the treatment of Ireland. It is the scale of justice that will determine the issue of the conflict with Ireland, if conflict there is to be. There is nothing we can do, cried the orator, turning to the Irish members, except the imprudence of placing in your hands evidence that will show that we are not acting on principles of justice towards you, that can render you for a moment formidable in our eyes, should the day unfortunately arise when you endeavour to lay hands on this great structure of the British empire. Let us be as strong in right as we are in population, in wealth, and in historic traditions, and then we shall not fear to do justice to Ireland. There is but one mode of making England weak in the face of Ireland—that is by applying to her principles of inequality and principles of injustice.

As members sallied forth from the House to dine, they felt that this vehement improvisation had put the true answer. Mr. Plunket's fine appeal to those who had been comrades of the Irish loyalists in guarding the union was well enough, yet who but the Irish loyalists had held Ireland in the hollow of their hands for generation upon generation, and who but they were answerable for the odious and dishonouring failure, so patent before all the world, to effect a true incorporation of their country in a united realm? And if it should happen that Irish loyalists should suffer from extension of equal civil rights to Irishmen, what sort of reason was that why the principle of exclusion and ascendency which had worked such mischief in the past, should be persisted in for a long and indefinite future? These views, it is important to observe, were shared, not only by the minister's own party, but by a powerful body among his opponents. Some of the gentlemen who had been most furious against the government for not stopping Irish meetings

in the autumn of 1883, were now most indignant at the bare idea of refusing or delaying a proposal for strengthening the hands of the very people who promoted and attended such meetings. It is true also that only two or three months before, Lord Hartington had declared that it would be most unwise to deal with the Irish franchise. Still more recently, Mr. W. H. Smith had declared that any extension of the suffrage in Ireland would draw after it 'confiscation of property, ruin of industry, withdrawal of capital,—misery, wretchedness, and war.' The valour of the platform, however, often expires in the keener air of cabinet and parliament. It became Lord Hartington's duty now to move the second reading of provisions which he had just described as most unwise provisions, and Mr. Smith found himself the object of brilliant mockery from the daring leader below the gangway on his own side.

Lord Randolph produced a more serious, though events soon showed it to be not any more solid an argument, when he said that the man who lives in a mud cabin very often has a decent holding, and has money in the savings bank besides, and more than that, he is often more fit to take an interest in politics, and to form a sound view about them, than the English agricultural labourer. The same speaker proceeded to argue that the Fenian proclivities of the towns would be more than counterbalanced by the increased power given to the peasantry. The incidents of agricultural life, he observed, are unfavourable to revolutionary movements, and the peasant is much more under the proper and legitimate influence of the Roman catholic priesthood than the lower classes of the towns. On the whole, the extension of the franchise to the peasantry of Ireland would not be unfavourable to the landlord interest. Yet Lord Randolph, who regaled the House with these chimerical speculations, had had far better opportunities than almost any other Englishman then in parliament of knowing something about Ireland.

What is certain is that English and Scotch members acted with their eyes open. Irish tories and Irish nationalists agreed in menacing predictions. The vast masses of Irish people, said the former, had no sense of loyalty and no love of order to which a government could appeal. In many districts the only person who was unsafe was the peace officer or the relatives of a murdered man. The effect of the change would be the utter annihilation of the political power of the most orderly, the most loyal, the most educated classes of Ireland, and the swamping of one-fourth of the community, representing two-thirds of its property. A representative of the great house of Hamilton in the Commons, amid a little cloud of the dishevelled prophecies too common in his class, assured the House that everybody knew that if the franchise in Ireland were extended, the days of home rule could not be far distant. The representative of

the great house of Beresford in the Lords, the resident possessor of a noble domain, an able and determined man, with large knowledge of his country, so far as large knowledge can be acquired from a single point of view, expressed his strong conviction that after the passage of this bill the Irish outlook would be blacker than it had ever been before.[1]

Another person, far more powerful than any Hamilton or Beresford, was equally explicit. With characteristic frigidity, precision, and confidence, the Irish leader had defined his policy and his expectations. 'Beyond a shadow of doubt,' he had said to a meeting in the Rotunda at Dublin, 'it will be for the Irish people in England—separated, isolated as they are—and for your independent Irish members, to determine at the next general election whether a tory or a liberal English ministry shall rule England. This is a great force and a great power. If we cannot rule ourselves, we can at least cause them to be ruled as we choose. This force has already gained for Ireland inclusion in the coming Franchise bill. We have reason to be proud, hopeful, and energetic.'[2] In any case, he informed the House of Commons, even if Ireland were not included in the bill, the national party would come back seventy-five strong. If household suffrage were conceded to Ireland, they would come back ninety strong.[3] That was the only difference. Therefore, though he naturally supported inclusion,[4] it was not at all indispensable to the success of his policy, and he watched the proceedings in the committee as calmly as he might have watched a battle of frogs and mice.

[1] Lord Waterford, July 7, 1884. [2] December 11, 1883.

[3] 'I am not at all sure,' Mr. Forster rashly said (March 31, 1884), 'that Mr. Parnell will increase his followers by means of this bill.'

[4] This was only the second occasion on which his party in cardinal divisions voted with the government.

CHAPTER IX

THE SOUDAN

(1884–1885)

You can only govern men by imagination: without imagination they are brutes. . . . 'Tis by speaking to the soul that you electrify men.—NAPOLEON.

In the late summer of 1881 a certain native of Dongola, proclaiming himself a heaven-inspired Mahdi, began to rally to his banner the wild tribes of the southern Soudan. His mission was to confound the wicked, the hypocrite, the unbeliever, and to convert the world to the true faith in the one God and his prophet. The fame of the Mahdi's eloquence, his piety, his zeal, rapidly spread. At his ear he found a counsellor, so well known to us after as the khalifa, and this man soon taught the prophet politics. The misrule of the Soudan by Egypt had been atrocious, and the combination of a religious revival with the destruction of that hated yoke swelled a cry that was irresistible. The rising rapidly extended, for fanaticism in such regions soon takes fire, and the Egyptian pashas had been sore oppressors, even judged by the rude standards of oriental states. Never was insurrection more amply justified. From the first, Mr. Gladstone's curious instinct for liberty disclosed to him that here was a case of 'a people rightly struggling to be free.' The phrase was mocked and derided then and down to the end of the chapter. Yet it was the simple truth. 'During all my political life,' he said at a later stage of Soudanese affairs, 'I am thankful to say that I have never opened my lips in favour of a domination such as that which has been exercised upon certain countries by certain other countries, and I am not going now to begin.' 'I look upon the possession of the Soudan,' he proceeded, 'as the calamity of Egypt. It has been a drain on her treasury, it has been a drain on her men. It is estimated that 100,000 Egyptians have laid down their lives in endeavouring to maintain that barren conquest.' Still stronger was the Soudanese side of the case. The rule of the Mahdi was itself a tyranny, and tribe fought with tribe, but that was deemed an easier

yoke than the sway of the pashas from Cairo. Every vice of eastern rule flourished freely under Egyptian hands. At Khartoum whole families of Coptic clerks kept the accounts of plundering raids supported by Egyptian soldiers, and 'this was a government collecting its taxes.' The function of the Egyptian soldiers 'was that of honest countrymen sharing in the villainy of the brigands from the Levant and Asia Minor, who wrung money, women, and drink from a miserable population.'[1] Yet the railing against Mr. Gladstone for saying that the 'rebels' were rightly struggling to be free could not have been more furious if the Mahdi had been for dethroning Marcus Aurelius or Saint Louis of France.

The ministers at Cairo, however, naturally could not find in their hearts to withdraw from territory that had been theirs for over sixty years,[2] although in the winter of 1882-3 Colonel Stewart, an able British officer, had reported that the Egyptian government was wholly unfit to rule the Soudan; it had not money enough, nor fighting men enough, nor administrative skill enough, and abandonment at least of large portions of it was the only reasonable course. Such counsels found no favour with the khedive's advisers and agents, and General Hicks, an Indian officer, appointed on the staff of the Egyptian army in the spring of 1883, was now despatched by the government of the khedive from Khartoum, for the recovery of distant and formidable regions. If his operations had been limited to the original intention of clearing Sennaar of rebels and protecting Khartoum, all might have been well. Unluckily some trivial successes over the Mahdi encouraged the Cairo government to design an advance into Kordofan, and the reconquest of all the vast wildernesses of the Soudan. Lord Dufferin, Sir E. Malet, Colonel Stewart, were all of them clear that to attempt any such task with an empty chest and a worthless army was madness, and they all argued for the abandonment of Kordofan and Darfur. The cabinet in London, fixed in their resolve not to accept responsibility for a Soudan war, and not to enter upon that responsibility by giving advice for or against the advance of Hicks, stood aloof.[3] In view of all that followed later, and of their subsequent adoption of the policy of abandoning the Soudan, British ministers would evidently have been wiser if they had now forbidden an advance so

[1] Wingate, pp. 50, 51.

[2] The Soudan was conquered in 1819 by Ismail Pasha, the son of Mehemet Ali, and from that date Egypt had a more or less insecure hold over the country. In 1870 Sir Samuel Baker added the equatorial provinces to the Egyptian Soudan.

[3] Mr. Gladstone said on Nov. 2, 1882:—'It is no part of the duty incumbent upon us to restore order in the Soudan. It is politically connected with Egypt in consequence of its very recent conquest; but it has not been included within the sphere of our operations, and we are by no means disposed to admit without qualification that it is within the sphere of our responsibility.' Lord Granville, May 7, 1883:—'H.M. government are in no way responsible for the operations in the Soudan, which have been undertaken under the authority of the Egyptian government, or for the appointment or actions of General Hicks.'

pregnant with disaster. Events showed this to have been the capital miscalculation whence all else of misfortune followed. The sounder the policy of abandonment, the stronger the reasons for insisting that the Egyptian government should not undertake operations inconsistent with that policy. The Soudan was not within the sphere of our responsibility, but Egypt was; and just because the separation of Egypt from the Soudan was wise and necessary, it might have been expected that England would peremptorily interpose to prevent a departure from the path of separation. What Hicks himself, a capable and dauntless man, thought of the chances we do not positively know, but he was certainly alive to the risks of such a march with such material. On November 5 (1883) the whole force was cut to pieces, the victorious dervishes were free to advance northwards, and the loose fabric of Egyptian authority was shattered to the ground.

II

The three British military officers in Cairo all agreed that the Egyptian government could not hold Khartoum if the Mahdi should draw down upon it; and unless a British, an Indian, or a Turkish force came to the rescue, abandonment of the Soudan was the only possible alternative. The London cabinet decided that they would not employ British or Indian troops in the Soudan, and though they had no objection to the resort to the Turks by Egypt, if the Turks would pay their own expenses (a condition fatal to any such resort), they strongly recommended the khedive to abandon all territory south of Assouan or Wady-Halfa. Sir Evelyn Baring, who had now assumed his post upon a theatre where he was for long years to come to play the commanding part, concurred in thinking that the policy of complete abandonment was the best admitted by the circumstances. It is the way of the world to suppose that because a given course is best, it must therefore be possible and ought to be simple. Baring and his colleagues at Cairo were under no such illusion, but it was the foundation of most of the criticism that now broke forth in the English press.

The unparalleled difficulties that ultimately attended the evacuation of the Soudan naturally led inconsiderate critics, — and such must ever be the majority,—to condemn the policy and the cabinet who ordered it. So apt are men in their rough judgments on great disputable things, to mistake a mere impression for a real opinion; and we must patiently admit that the Result—success or failure in the Event—is the most that they have time for, and all that they can go by. Yet two remarks are to be made upon this facile censure. The first is that those who knew the Soudan best, approved most. On January 22, 1884, Gordon wrote to Lord Granville that the Soudan ever was and ever would be a useless possession, and

that he thought the Queen's ministers 'fully justified in recommending evacuation, inasmuch as the sacrifices necessary towards securing good government would be far too onerous to admit of such an attempt being made.' Colonel Stewart quite agreed, and added the exclamation that nobody who had ever visited the Soudan could escape the reflection, 'What a useless possession and what a huge encumbrance on Egypt!' As we shall see, the time soon came when Gordon accepted the policy of evacuation, even with an emphasis of his own. The second remark is that the reconquest of the Soudan and the holding of Khartoum was for the Egyptian government, if left to its own resources, neither more nor less than impossible; these objects, whether they were good objects or bad, not only meant recourse to British troops for the first immense operations, but the retention of them in a huge and most inhospitable region for an indefinite time. A third consideration will certainly not be overlooked by anybody who thinks on the course of the years of Egyptian reform that have since elapsed, and constitute so remarkable a chapter of British administration,—namely, that this beneficent achievement would have been fatally clogged, if those who conducted it had also had the Soudan on their hands. The renovation or reconstruction of what is called Egypt proper, its finances, its army, its civil rule, would have been absolutely out of reach, if at the same time its guiding statesmen had been charged with the responsibilities of recovering and holding that vaster tract which had been so rashly acquired and so mercilessly misgoverned. This is fully admitted by those who have had most to do with the result.

III

The policy of evacuation was taken as carrying with it the task of extricating the Egyptian garrisons. This aim induced Mr. Gladstone's cabinet once more to play an active military part, though Britain had no share in planting these garrisons where they were. Wise men in Egypt were of the same mind as General Gordon, that in the eastern Soudan it would have been better for the British government to keep quiet, and 'let events work themselves out.' Unfortunately the ready clamour of headlong philanthropists, political party men, and the men who think England humiliated if she ever lets slip an excuse for drawing her sword, drove the cabinet on to the rocks. When the decision of the cabinet was taken (Feb. 12, 1883) to send troops to Suakin, Mr. Gladstone stood alone in objecting. Many thousands of savages were slaughtered under humanitarian pressure, not a few English lives were sacrificed, much treasure flowed, and yet Sinkat fell, and Tokar fell, and our labours in the eastern Soudan were practically fruitless.[1] The

[1] It was a general mistake at that time to suppose that wherever a garrison fell into the hands of the Mahdi, they were massacred. At Tokar, for instance, the soldiers were incorporated by the victors. See Wingate, p. 553.

operations had no effect upon the roll of the fierce mahdi wave over the Soudan.

In England, excitement of the unsound sort that is independent of knowledge, consideration, or deliberation; independent of any weighing of the actual facts and any forecast of latent possibilities, grew more and more vociferous. Ministers quailed. Twice they inquired of their agent in Egypt[1] whether General Gordon might not be of use, and twice they received an adverse reply, mainly on the ground that the presence in authority of a Christian officer was a dubious mode of confronting a sweeping outbreak of moslem fanaticism, and would inevitably alienate tribes that were still not caught by the Mahdi.[2] Unhappily a third application from London at last prevailed, and Sir E. Baring, supported by Nubar, by Sir Evelyn Wood, by Colonel Watson, who had served with Gordon and knew him well, all agreed that Gordon would be the best man if he would pledge himself to carry out the policy of withdrawing from the Soudan as quickly as possible. 'Whoever goes,' said Sir E. Baring in pregnant words to Lord Granville, will 'undertake a service of great difficulty and danger.' This was on January 16th. Two days later the die was cast. Mr. Gladstone was at Hawarden. Lord Granville submitted the question (Jan. 14, 1884) to him in this form:—'If Gordon says he believes he could by his personal influence excite the tribes to escort the Khartoum garrison and inhabitants to Suakin, a little pressure on Baring might be advisable. The destruction of these poor people will be a great disaster.' Mr. Gladstone telegraphed that to this and other parts of the same letter, he agreed. Granville then sent him a copy of the telegram putting 'a little pressure on Baring.' To this Mr. Gladstone replied (Jan. 16) in words that, if they had only been taken to heart, would have made all the difference:—

I can find no fault with your telegram to Baring *re* Chinese Gordon, and the main point that strikes me is this: While his opinion on the Soudan may be of great value, must we not be very careful in any instruction we give, that he does not shift the centre of gravity as to political and military responsibility for that country. In brief, if he reports what should be done, he should not be the judge *who* should do it, nor ought he to commit us on that point by advice officially given. It would be extremely difficult after sending him to reject such advice, and it should therefore, I think, be made clear that he is not our agent for the purpose of advising on that point.

[1] Granville to Baring, Dec. 1, 1883; Jan. 10, 1884.

[2] Gordon had suppressed the Taiping rising in China in 1863. In 1874 he was appointed by the Egyptian government governor-general of the equatorial provinces of central Africa. In 1876 he resigned owing to trouble with the governor-general of the Soudan upon the suppression of the slave trade, but was appointed (1877) governor-general of the Soudan, Darfur, the equatorial provinces, and the Red Sea littoral. He held this position till the end of 1879, suppressing the slave trade with a strong hand and improving the means of communication throughout the Soudan. He succeeded in establishing comparative order. Then the new Egyptian government reversed Gordon's policy, and the result of his six years' work soon fell to pieces.

On January 18, Lord Hartington (then secretary of state for war), Lord Granville, Lord Northbrook, and Sir Charles Dilke, met at the war office in Pall Mall. The summons was sudden. Lord Wolseley brought Gordon and left him in the ante-room. After a conversation with the ministers, he came out and said to Gordon, 'Government are determined to evacuate the Soudan, for they will not guarantee the future government. Will you go and do it?' '*I said*, "Yes." *He said*, "Go in." *I went in and saw them. They said*, "Did Wolseley tell you our orders?" *I said*, "Yes." *I said*, "You will not guarantee future government of the Soudan, and you wish me to go up and evacuate now." *They said*, "Yes," *and it was over, and I left at* 8 *p.m. for Calais.*'[1] This graphic story does not pretend to be a full version of all that passed, though it puts the essential point unmistakably enough. Lord Granville seems to have drawn Gordon's special attention to the measures to be taken for the security of the Egyptian garrisons (plural) still holding positions in the Soudan and to the best mode of evacuating the interior.[2] On the other hand, according to a very authentic account that I have seen, Gordon on this occasion stated that the danger at Khartoum was exaggerated, and that he would be able to bring away the garrisons without difficulty.

Thus in that conclave of sober statesmen a tragedy began. The next day one of the four ministers met another; 'We were proud of ourselves yesterday—are you sure we did not commit a gigantic folly?' The prime minister had agreed at once on receiving the news of what was done at the war office, and telegraphed assent the same night.[3] The whole cabinet met four days later, Mr. Gladstone among them, and the decision was approved. There was hardly a choice, for by that time Gordon was at Brindisi. Gordon, as Mr. Gladstone said, was a hero of heroes. He was a soldier of infinite personal courage and daring; of striking military energy, initiative and resource; a high, pure, and single character, dwelling much in the region of the unseen. But as all who knew him admit, and as his own records testify, notwithstanding an under-current of shrewd common-sense, he was the creature, almost the sport, of impulse; his impressions and purposes changed with the speed of lightning; anger often mastered him; he went very often by intuitions and inspirations rather than by cool inference from carefully surveyed fact: with many variations of mood he mixed, as we often see in people less famous, an invincible faith in his own rapid prepossessions while they lasted. Everybody now discerns that to despatch a soldier of this tempera-

[1] Gordon's Letters to Barnes, 1885. Lord Granville took his ticket, Lord Wolseley carried the General's bag, and the Duke of Cambridge held open the carriage door.

[2] Baring's Instructions to Gordon (Jan. 25, 1884).

[3] Gladstone to Granville, Jan. 19, 1884.—'I telegraphed last night my concurrence in your proceedings about Gordon: but Chester would not awake and the message only went on this morning.'

ment on a piece of business that was not only difficult and dangerous, as Sir E. Baring said, but profoundly obscure, and needing vigilant sanity and self-control, was little better than to call in a wizard with his magic. Mr. Gladstone always professed perplexity in understanding why the violent end of the gallant Cavagnari in Afghanistan, stirred the world so little in comparison with the fate of Gordon. The answer is that Gordon seized the imagination of England, and seized it on its higher side. His religion was eccentric, but it was religion; the Bible was the rock on which he founded himself, both old dispensation and new; he was known to hate forms, ceremonies, and all the 'solemn plausibilities'; his speech was sharp, pithy, rapid, and ironic; above all, he knew the ways of war and would not bear the sword for nought. All this was material enough to make a popular ideal, and this is what Gordon in an ever-increasing degree became, to the immense inconvenience of the statesmen, otherwise so sensible and wary, who had now improvidently let the genie forth from the jar.

IV

It has been sometimes contended that all the mischief that followed was caused by the diversion of Gordon from Suakin, his original destination. If he had gone to the Red Sea, as originally intended, there to report on the state and look of things in the Soudan, instead of being waylaid and brought to Cairo, and thence despatched to Khartoum, they say, no catastrophe would have happened. This is not certain, for the dervishes in the eastern Soudan were in the flush of open revolt, and Gordon might either have been killed or taken prisoner, or else he would have come back without performing any part of his mission. In fact, on his way from London to Port Said, Gordon had suggested that with a view to carrying out evacuation, the khedive should make him governor-general of the Soudan. Lord Granville authorised Baring to procure the nomination, and this Sir Evelyn did, 'for the time necessary to accomplish the evacuation.' The instructions were thus changed, in an important sense, but the change was suggested by Gordon and sanctioned by Lord Granville.[1]

When Gordon left London his instructions, drafted in fact by himself, were that he should 'consider and report upon the best mode of effecting the evacuation of the interior of the Soudan.' He was also to perform such duties as the Egyptian government might wish to entrust to him, and as might be

[1] Dilke in House of Commons, Feb. 14, 1884. See also Lord Granville to Sir E. Baring, March 28, 1884. In recapitulating the instructions given to General Gordon, Lord Granville says: — '*His* (Gordon's) *first proposal* was to proceed to Suakin with the object of reporting from thence on the best method of effecting the evacuation of the Soudan. . . . His instructions, *drawn up in accordance with his own views*, were to report to her Majesty's government on the military situation in the Soudan,' etc.

communicated to him by Sir E. Baring.[1] At Cairo Baring and Nubar, after discussion with Gordon, altered the mission from one of advice and report to an executive mission—a change that was doubtless authorised and covered by the original reference to duties to be entrusted to him by Egypt. But there was no change in the policy either at Downing Street or Cairo. Whether advisory or executive, the only policy charged upon the mission was abandonment. When the draft of the new instructions was read to Gordon at Cairo, Sir E. Baring expressly asked him whether he entirely concurred in 'the policy of abandoning the Soudan,' and Gordon not only concurred, but suggested the strengthening words, that he thought 'it should on no account be changed.'[2] This despatch, along with the instructions to Gordon making this vast alteration, was not received in London until Feb. 7. By this time Gordon was crossing the desert, and out of reach of the English foreign office.

On his way from Brindisi, Gordon had prepared a memorandum for Sir E. Baring, in which he set out his opinion that the Soudan had better be restored to the different petty sultans in existence before the Egyptian conquest, and an attempt should be made to form them into some sort of confederation. These petty rulers might be left to accept the Mahdi for their sovereign or not, just as they pleased. But in the same document he emphasised the policy of abandonment. 'I understand,' he says, 'that H.M.'s government have come to the irrevocable decision not to incur the very onerous duty of granting to the peoples of the Soudan a just future government.' Left to their independence, the sultans 'would doubtless fight among themselves.' As for future good government, it was evident that 'this we could not secure them without an inordinate expenditure of men and money. The Soudan is a useless possession; ever was so, and ever will be so. No one who has ever lived in the Soudan can escape the reflection, What a useless possession is this land.' Therefore—so he winds up—'I think H.M.'s government are fully justified in recommending the evacuation, inasmuch as the sacrifices necessary towards securing a good government would be far too onerous to admit of any such attempt being made. Indeed, one may say it is impracticable at any cost. *H.M.'s government will now leave them as God has placed them.*'[3]

It was, therefore, and it is, pure sophistry to contend that Gordon's policy in undertaking his disastrous mission was evacuation but not abandonment. To say that the Soudanese should be left in the state in which God had placed them, to fight it out among themselves, if they were so minded, is as

[1] For the full text of these instructions, see Appendix.
[2] Baring to Granville, January 28, 1884.
[3] Dated, *Steamship 'Tanjore,' at Sea, Jan.* 22, 1884.

good a definition of abandonment as can be invented, and this was the whole spirit of the instructions imposed by the government of the Queen and accepted by Gordon.

Gordon took with him instruments from the khedive into which, along with definite and specific statements that evacuation was the object of his mission, two or three loose sentences are slipped about 'establishing organized government in the different provinces of the Soudan,' maintaining order, and the like. It is true also that the British cabinet sanctioned the extension of the area of evacuation from Khartoum to the whole Soudan.[1] Strictly construed, the whole body of instructions, including firmans and khedive's proclamations, is not technically compact nor coherent. But this is only another way of saying that Gordon was to have the widest discretionary powers as to the manner of carrying out the policy, and the best time and mode of announcing it. The policy itself, as well understood by Gordon as by everybody else, was untouched, and it was: to leave the Soudanese in the state in which God had placed them.

The hot controversy on this point is idle and without substance—the idlest controversies are always the hottest—for not only was Gordon the last man in all the world to hold himself bound by official instructions, but the actual conditions of the case were too little known, too shifting, too unstable, to permit of hard and fast directions beforehand how to solve so desperate a problem. Two things at any rate were clear—one, that Gordon should faithfully adhere to the policy of evacuation and abandonment which he had formally accepted; the other, that the British government should leave him a free hand. Unhappily neither of these two clear things was accepted by either of the parties.

Gordon's policies were many and very mutable. Viewing the frightful embarrassments that enveloped him, we cannot wonder. Still the same considerateness that is always so bounteously and so justly extended to the soldier in the field, is no less due in its measure to the councillor in the cabinet. This is a bit of equity often much neglected both by contemporaries and by history.

He had undertaken his mission without any serious and measured forecast, such as his comrade, Colonel Stewart, was well fitted to supply. His first notion was that he could restore the representatives of the old rulers, but when he got into the country, he found that there were none; with one by no means happy exception, they had all disappeared. When he reached Berber, he learned more clearly how the question of evacuation was interlaced with other questions. Once at Khartoum, at

[1] Granville to Baring, March 28.

first he thought himself welcome as a deliverer, and then when new light as to the real feelings of the Soudanese broke upon him, he flung the policy of his mission overboard. Before the end of February, instead of the suzerainty of Egypt, the British government should control Soudanese administration, with Zobeir as their governor-general. 'When Gordon left this country,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'and when he arrived in Egypt, he declared it to be, and I have not the smallest doubt that it was—a fixed portion of his policy, that no British force should be employed in aid of his mission.'[1] When March came, he flung himself with ardour into the policy of 'smashing up' the Mahdi, with resort to British and Indian troops. This was a violent reversal of all that had been either settled or dreamed of, whether in London or at Cairo. A still more vehement stride came next. He declared that to leave outlying garrisons to their fate would be an 'indelible disgrace.' Yet, as Lord Hartington said, the government 'were under no moral obligation to use the military resources of this empire for the relief of those garrisons.' As for Gordon's opinion that 'indelible disgrace' would attach to the British government if they were not relieved, 'I do not admit,' said the minister very sensibly, 'that General Gordon is on this point a better authority than anybody else.'[2] All this illustrates the energy of Gordon's mental movements, and also, what is more important, the distracting difficulties of the case before him. In one view and one demand he strenuously persevered, as we shall now see.

Mr. Gladstone at first, when Gordon set all instructions at defiance, was for recalling him. A colleague also was for recalling him on the first instant when he changed his policy. Another important member of the cabinet was, on the contrary, for an expedition. 'I cannot admit,' wrote a fourth leading minister, 'that either generals or statesmen who have accepted the offer of a man to lead a forlorn hope, are in the least bound to risk the lives of thousands for the uncertain chance of saving the forlorn hope.' Some think that this was stern common sense, others call it ignoble. The nation, at any rate, was in one of its high idealising humours, though Gordon had roused some feeling against himself in this country (unjustly enough) by his decree formally sanctioning the holding of slaves.

The general had not been many hours in Khartoum (February 18) before he sent a telegram to Sir E. Baring, proposing that on his withdrawal from Khartoum, Zobeir Pasha should be named his successor as governor-general of the Soudan: he should be made a K.C.M.G., and have presents given to him. This request was strenuously pressed by Gordon. Zobeir had been a prime actor in the devastations of the slave trade; it was he who had acquired Darfur for Egypt; he was a first-

[1] Feb. 23, 1885. [2] May 13, 1884.

rate fighting man, and the ablest leader in the Soudan. He is described by the English officer who knows the Soudan best, as a far-seeing, thoughtful man of iron will—a born ruler of men.[1] The Egyptian government had desired to send him down to aid in the operations at Suakin in 1883, but the government in London vetoed him, as they were now to veto him a second time. The Egyptian Government was to act on its own responsibility, but not to do what it thought best. So now with Gordon.

Gordon in other days had caused Zobeir's son to be shot, and this was supposed to have set up an unquenchable blood-feud between them. Before reaching Cairo, he had suggested that Zobeir should be sent to Cyprus, and there kept out of the way. This was not done. On Gordon's way through Cairo, the two men met in what those present describe as a highly dramatic interview. Zobeir bitterly upbraided Gordon: 'You killed my son, whom I entrusted to you. He was as your son. You brought my wives and women and children in chains to Khartoum.' Still even after that incident, Gordon declared that he had 'a mystical feeling' that Zobeir and he were all right.[2] What inspired his reiterated demand for the immediate despatch of Zobeir is surmised to have been the conviction forced upon him during his journey to Khartoum, that his first idea of leaving the various petty sultans to fight it out with the Mahdi, would not work; that the Mahdi had got so strong a hold that he could only be met by a man of Zobeir's political capacity, military skill, and old authority. Sir E. Baring, after a brief interval of hesitation, now supported Gordon's request. So did the shrewd and expert Colonel Stewart. Nubar too favoured the idea. The cabinet could not at once assent; they were startled by the change of front as to total withdrawal from the Soudan—the very object of Gordon's mission, and accepted by him as such. On February 21 Mr. Gladstone reported to the Queen that the cabinet were of opinion that there would be the gravest objection to nominating by an assumption of British authority a successor to General Gordon in the Soudan, nor did they as yet see sufficient reasons for going beyond Gordon's memorandum of January 25, by making special provision for the government of that country. But at first it looked as if ministers might yield, if Baring, Gordon, and Nubar persisted.

As ill-fortune had it, the Zobeir plan leaked out at home by Gordon's indiscretion before the government decided. The omnipotent though not omniscient divinity called public

[1] Wingate's *Mahdism*, p. 105.

[2] *Baring to Granville, Jan.* 28.—'I had a good deal of conversation with General Gordon as to the manner in which Zobeir Pasha should be treated. Gen. Gordon entertains a high opinion of Zobeir Pasha's energy and ability. He possesses great influence in the Soudan, and General Gordon is of opinion that *circumstances might arise which would render it desirable that he should be sent back to the Soudan.*

opinion intervened. The very men who had most loudly clamoured for the extrication of the Egyptian garrisons, who had pressed with most importunity for the despatch of Gordon, who had been most urgent for the necessity of giving him a free hand, now declared that it would be a national degradation and a European scandal to listen to Gordon's very first request. He had himself unluckily given them a capital text, having once said that Zobeir was alone responsible for the slave trade of the previous ten years. Gordon's idea was, as he explained, to put Zobeir into a position like that of the Ameer of Afghanistan, as a buffer between Egypt and the Mahdi, with a subsidy, moral support, and all the rest of a buffer arrangement. The idea may or may not have been a good one; nobody else had a better.

It was not at all surprising that the cabinet should ask what new reason had come to light why Zobeir should be trusted: why he should oppose the Mahdi whom at first he was believed to have supported; why he should turn the friend of Egypt; why he should be relied upon as the faithful ally of England. To these and other doubts Gordon had excellent answers (March 8). Zobeir would run straight, because it was his interest. If he would be dangerous, was not the Mahdi dangerous, and whom save Zobeir could you set up against the Mahdi? You talked of slave-holding and slave-hunting, but would slave-holding and slave-hunting stop with your own policy of evacuation? Slave-holding you cannot interfere with, and as for slave-hunting, that depended on the equatorial provinces, where Zobeir could be prevented from going, and besides he would have his hands full in consolidating his power elsewhere. As for good faith towards Egypt, Zobeir's stay in Cairo had taught him our power, and being a great trader, he would rather seek Egypt's close alliance. Anyhow, said Gordon, 'if you do not send Zobeir, you have no chance of getting the garrisons away.'

The matter was considered at two meetings of the cabinet, but the prime minister was prevented by his physician from attending.[1] A difference of opinion showed itself upon the despatch of Zobeir; viewed as an abstract question, three of the Commons members inclined to favour it, but on the practical question, the Commons members were unanimous that no government from either side of the House could venture to sanction Zobeir. Mr. Gladstone had become a strong convert to the plan of sending Zobeir. 'I am better

[1] (*From his diary.*) *March* 9.— . . . At night recognised the fact of a cold, and began to deal with it. 10th. Kept my bed all day. 11th. The cabinet sat, and Granville came to and fro with the communications, Clark having prohibited my attendance. Read *Sybil*. 12th. Bed as yesterday. 13th. Got to my sitting-room in the evening. It has, however, taken longer this time to clear the chest, and Clark reports the pulse still too high by ten. Saw Granville. Conclave, 7½ to 8¾, on telegram to Baring for Gordon. I was not allowed to attend the cabinet.

in chest and generally,' he wrote to Lord Granville, 'but unfortunately not in throat and voice, and Clark interdicts my appearance at cabinet, but I am available for any necessary communication, say with you, or you and Hartington.' One of the ministers went to see him in his bed, and they conversed for two hours. The minister, on his return, reported with some ironic amusement that Mr. Gladstone considered it very likely that they could not bring parliament to swallow Zobeir, but believed that he himself could. Whether his confidence in this was right or wrong, he was unable to turn his cabinet. The Queen telegraphed her agreement with the prime minister. But this made no difference. 'On Saturday 15,' Mr. Gladstone notes, 'it seemed as if by my casting vote Zobeir was to be sent to Gordon. But on Sunday —— and —— receded from their ground, and I gave way. The nature of the evidence on which judgments are formed in this most strange of all cases, precludes (in reason) pressing all conclusions, which are but preferences, to extremes.' 'It is well known,' said Mr. Gladstone in the following year when the curtain had fallen on the catastrophe, 'that if, when the recommendation to send Zobeir was made, we had complied with it, an address from this House to the crown would have paralysed our action; and though it was perfectly true that the decision arrived at was the judgment of the cabinet, it was also no less the judgment of parliament and the people.' So Gordon's request was refused.

It is true that, as a minister put it at the time, to send Zobeir would have been a gambler's throw. But then what was it but a gambler's throw to send Gordon himself? The Soudanese chieftain might possibly have done all that Gordon and Stewart, who knew the ground and were watching the quick fluctuation of events with elastic minds, now positively declared that he would have the strongest motives not to do. Even then, could the issue have been worse? To run all the risks involved in the despatch of Gordon, and then immediately to refuse the request that he persistently represented as furnishing him his only chance, was an incoherence that the parliament and people of England have not often surpassed.[1] All through this critical month, from the 10th until the 30th, Mr. Gladstone was suffering more or less from indisposition which he found it difficult to throw off.

VI

The chance, whatever it may have been, passed like a flash. Just as the proposal inflamed many in England, so it did mischief in Cairo. Zobeir like other people got wind of it; enemies of England at Cairo set to work with him; Sir E. Baring might have found him hard to deal with. It was

[1] The case of the government was stated with all the force and reason of which it admitted, in Lord Granville's despatch of March 28, 1884.

Gordon's rashness that had made the design public. Gordon, too, as it happened, had made a dire mistake on his way up. At Berber he had shown the khedive's secret firman, announcing the intended abandonment of the Soudan. The news spread; it soon reached the Mahdi himself, and the Mahdi made politic use of it. He issued a proclamation of his own, asking all the sheikhs who stood aloof from him or against him, what they had to gain by supporting a pasha who was the next day going to give the Soudan up. Gordon's argument for this unhappy proceeding was that, the object of his mission being to get out of the country and leave them to their independence, he could have put no sharper spur into them to make them organize their own government. But he spoke of it after as the fatal proclamation, and so it was.[1]

What happened was that the tribes round Khartoum almost at once began to waver. From the middle of March, says a good observer, one searches in vain for a single circumstance hopeful for Gordon. 'When the eye wanders over the huge and hostile Soudan, notes the little pin-point garrisons, each smothered in a cloud of Arab spears, and remembers that Gordon and Stewart proceeded to rule this vast empire, already given away to others, one feels that the Soudanese view was marked by common sense.[2] Gordon's too sanguine prediction that the men who had beaten Hicks, and the men who afterwards beat Baker, would never fight beyond their tribal limits, did not come true. Wild forces gathered round the Mahdi as he advanced northwards. The tribes that had wavered joined them. Berber fell on May 26. The pacific mission had failed, and Gordon and his comrade Stewart—a more careful and clear-sighted man than himself—were shut up in Khartoum.

Distractions grew thicker upon the cabinet, and a just reader, now far away from the region of votes of censure, will bear them in mind. The Queen, like many of her subjects, grew impatient, but Mr. Gladstone was justified in reminding her of the imperfect knowledge, and he might have called it blank ignorance, with which the government was required on the shortest notice to form conclusions on a remote and more than half-barbarous region.

[1] In the light of this proceeding, the following is curious:—'There is one subject which I cannot imagine any one differing about. That is the impolicy of announcing our intention to evacuate Khartoum. Even if we were bound to do so we should have said nothing about it. The moment it is known we have given up the game, every man will go over to the Mahdi. All men worship the rising sun. The difficulties of evacuation will be enormously increased, if, indeed, the withdrawal of our garrison is not rendered impossible.'—Interview with General Gordon, *Pall Mall Gazette*, Jan. 8, 1884.

'In the afternoon of Feb. 13 Gordon assembled all the influential men of the province and showed them the secret firman. The reading of this document caused great excitement, but at the same time its purport was received evidently with much gratification. It is worthy of note that the whole of the notables present at this meeting subsequently threw in their cause with the Mahdi.'—Henry William Gordon's *Events in the Life of Charles George Gordon*, p. 340.

[2] Wingate, p. 110.

Gordon had told them that he wanted to take his steam vessels to Equatoria and serve the king of the Belgians. This Sir Evelyn Baring refused to allow, not believing Gordon to be in immediate danger (March 26). From Gordon himself came a telegram (March 28), 'I think we are now safe, and that, as the Nile rises, we shall account for the rebels.' Mr. Gladstone was still unwell and absent. Through Lord Granville he told the cabinet (March 15) that, with a view to speedy departure from Khartoum, he would not even refuse absolutely to send cavalry to Berber, much as he disliked it, provided the military authorities thought it could be done, and provided also that it was declared necessary for Gordon's safety, and was strictly confined to that object. The cabinet decided against an immediate expedition, one important member vowing that he would resign if an expedition were not sent in the autumn, another vowing that he would resign if it were. On April 7, the question of an autumn expedition again came up. Six were favourable, five the other way, including the prime minister.

Almost by the end of March it was too probable that no road of retreat was any longer open. If they could cut no way out, either by land or water, what form of relief was possible? A diversion from Suakin to Berber—one of Gordon's own suggestions? But the soldiers differed. Fierce summer heat and little water; an Indian force might stand it; even they would find it tough. A dash by a thousand cavalry across two hundred miles of desert—one hundred of them without water; without communication with its base, and with the certainty that whatever might befall, no reinforcements could reach it for months? What would be your feelings, and your language, asked Lord Hartington, if besides having Gordon and Stewart beleaguered in Khartoum, we also knew that a small force of British cavalry unable to take the offensive was shut up in the town of Berber?[1] Then the government wondered whether a move on Dongola might not be advantageous. Here again the soldiers thought the torrid climate a fatal objection, and the benefits doubtful. Could not Gordon, some have asked, have made his retreat at an early date after reaching Khartoum, by way of Berber? Answer—the Nile was too low. All this it was that at a later day, when the time had come to call his government to its account, justified Mr. Gladstone in saying that in such enterprises as these in the Soudan, mistakes and miscarriages were inevitable, for they were the proper and certain consequences of undertakings that lie beyond the scope of human means and of rational and prudent human action, and are a war against nature.[2] If anybody now points to the victorious expedition to Khartoum thirteen years later, as falsifying such language

[1] Lord Hartington, House of Commons, May 13, 1884. An admirable speech, and the best defence of ministers up to this date.

[2] Address to the electors of Midlothian, September 17, 1885.

as this, that experience so far from falsifying entirely justifies. A war against nature demands years of study, observation, preparation, and those who are best acquainted with the conditions at first hand all agree that neither the tribes nor the river nor the desert were well known enough in 1885, to guarantee that overthrow in the case of the Mahdi, which long afterwards destroyed his successor.

On April 14 Sir E. Baring, while as keenly averse as anybody in the world to an expedition for the relief of Khartoum if such an expedition could be avoided, still watching events with a clear and concentrated gaze, assured the government that it was very likely to be unavoidable; it would be well, therefore, without loss of time, to prepare for a move as soon as ever the Nile should rise. Six days before, Lord Wolseley also had written to Lord Hartington at the war office, recommending immediate and active preparations for an exclusively British expedition to Khartoum. Time, he said, is the most important element in this question, and in truth it was, for time was flying, and so were events. The cabinet were reported as feeling that Gordon, 'who was despatched on a mission essentially pacific, had found himself, from whatever cause, unable to prosecute it effectually, and now proposed the use of military means, which might fail, and which, even if they should succeed, might be found to mean a new subjugation of the Soudan—the very consummation which it was the object of Gordon's mission to avert.' On June 27 it was known in London that Berber had fallen a month before.

VII

Lord Hartington, as head of the war department, had a stronger leaning towards the despatch of troops than some of his colleagues, but, says Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville in a letter of 1888, 'I don't think he ever came to any sharp issue (like mine about Zobeir); rather that in the main he got what he wanted.' Wherever the fault lay, the issue was unfortunate. The generals in London fought the battle of the routes with unabated tenacity for month after month. One was for the approach to Khartoum by the Nile; another by Suakin and Berber; a third by the Korosko desert. A departmental committee reported in favour of the Nile as the easiest, safest, and cheapest, but they did not report until July 29. It was not until the beginning of August that the House of Commons was asked for a vote of credit, and Lord Hartington authorised General Stephenson at Cairo to take measures for moving troops southward. In his despatch of August 8, Lord Hartington still only speaks of operations for the relief of Gordon, 'should they become necessary'; he says the government were still unconvinced that Gordon could not secure the withdrawal of the garrison from Khartoum; but 'they are of opinion that

the time had arrived for obtaining accurate information as to his position,' and, 'if necessary, for rendering him assistance.'[1] As soon as the decision was taken, preparations were carried out with rapidity and skill. In the same month Lord Wolseley was appointed to command the expedition, and on September 9 he reached Cairo. The difficulties of a military decision had been great, said Lord Hartington, and there was besides, he added, a difference of opinion among the military authorities.[2] It was October 5 before Lord Wolseley reached Wady-Halfa, and the Nile campaign began.

Whatever decision military critics may ultimately form upon the choice of the Nile route, or upon the question whether the enterprise would have been any more successful if the route had been by Suakin or Korosko, it is at least certain that no position, whether strategically false or no, has ever evoked more splendid qualities in face of almost preterhuman difficulties, hardship, and labour. The treacherous and unknown river, for it was then unknown, with its rapids, its shifting sandbanks and tortuous channels and rocky barriers and heart-breaking cataracts; the Bayuda desert, haunted by fierce and stealthy enemies; the trying climate, the heat, the thirst, all the wearisome embarrassments of transport on camels emaciated by lack of food and water—such scenes exacted toil, patience, and courage as worthy of remark and admiration as if the advance had successfully achieved its object. Nobody lost heart. 'Everything goes on swimmingly,' wrote Sir Herbert Stewart to Lord Wolseley, '*except as to time.*' This was on January 14, 1885. Five days later, he was mortally wounded.

The end of it all, in spite of the gallantry of Abu Klea and Kirbekan, of desert column and river column, is only too well-known. Four of Gordon's small steamers coming down from Khartoum met the British desert column at Gubat on January 21. The general in command at once determined to proceed to Khartoum, but delayed his start until the morning of the 24th. The steamers needed repairs, and Sir Charles Wilson deemed it necessary for the safety of his troops to make a reconnaissance down the river towards Berber before starting up to Khartoum. He took with him on two of Gordon's steamers—described as of the dimensions of the penny boats upon the Thames, but bullet proof—a force of twenty-six British, and two hundred and forty Soudanese. He had also in tow a nugger laden with dhura. This was what, when Khartoum came in sight (Jan. 28) the 'relief force' actually amounted to. As the two steamers ran slowly on, a solitary voice from the river-bank now and again called out to them that Khartoum was taken, and Gordon slain. Eagerly searching with their glasses, the officers perceived that

[1] See the official *History of the Soudan Campaign*, by Colonel Colville, Part I. pp. 45-6.

[2] February 27, 1885.

the government-house was a wreck, and that no flag was flying. Gordon, in fact, had met his death two days before.

Mr. Gladstone afterwards always spoke of the betrayal of Khartoum. But Major Kitchener, who prepared the official report, says that the accusations of treachery were all vague, and to his mind, the outcome of mere supposition. 'In my opinion,' he says, 'Khartoum fell from sudden assault, when the garrison were too exhausted by privations to make proper resistance.'[1] The idea that the relieving force was only two days late is misleading. A nugger's load of dhura would not have put an end to the privations of the fourteen thousand people still in Khartoum; and even supposing that the handful of troops at Gubat could have effected their advance upon Khartoum many days earlier, it is hard to believe that they were strong enough either to drive off the Mahdi, or to hold him at bay until the river column had come up.

VIII

The prime minister was on a visit to the Duke of Devonshire at Holker, where he had many long conversations with Lord Hartington, and had to deal with heavy post-bags. On Thursday, Feb. 5, after writing to the Queen and others, he heard what had happened on the Nile ten days before. 'After 11 A.M.,' he records, 'I learned the sad news of the fall or betrayal of Khartoum. H[artington] and I, with C. [his wife], went off by the first train, and reached Downing Street soon after 8.15. The circumstances are sad and trying. It is one of the least points about them that they may put an end to this government.'[2] The next day the cabinet met; discussions 'difficult but harmonious.' The Queen sent to him and to Lord Hartington at Holker an angry telegram—blaming her ministers for what had happened—a telegram not in cypher as usual, but open. Mr. Gladstone addressed to the Queen in reply (Feb. 5, 1885) a vindication of the course taken by the cabinet; and it may be left to close an unedifying and a tragic chapter:—

To the Queen.

Mr. Gladstone has had the honour this day to receive your Majesty's telegram *en clair*, relating to the deplorable intelligence received this day from Lord Wolseley, and stating that it is too fearful to consider that the fall of Khartoum might have been prevented and many precious lives saved by earlier action. Mr. Gladstone does not presume to estimate the means of judgment possessed by your Majesty, but so far as his information and recollection at the moment go, he is not altogether able to follow the conclusion which your Majesty has been pleased thus to announce. Mr. Gladstone is under the impression that

[1] Colvile, ii., Appendix 47, p. 274. Apart from the authority of Kitchener Gordon's own language shows that he knew himself to be *in extremis* by the end of December.

[2] The story that he went to the theatre the same night is untrue.

Lord Wolseley's force might have been sufficiently advanced to save Khartoum, had not a large portion of it been detached by a circuitous route along the river, upon the express application of General Gordon, to occupy Berber on the way to the final destination. He speaks, however, with submission on a point of this kind. There is indeed in some quarters a belief that the river route ought to have been chosen at an earlier period, and had the navigation of the Nile in its upper region been as well known as that of the Thames, this might have been a just ground of reproach. But when, on the first symptoms that the position of General Gordon in Khartoum was not secure, your Majesty's advisers at once sought from the most competent persons the best information they could obtain respecting the Nile route, the balance of testimony and authority was decidedly against it, and the idea of the Suakin and Berber route, with all its formidable difficulties, was entertained in preference; nor was it until a much later period that the weight of opinion and information warranted the definitive choice of the Nile route. Your Majesty's ministers were well aware that climate and distance were far more formidable than the sword of the enemy, and they deemed it right, while providing adequate military means, never to lose from view what might have proved to be the destruction of the gallant army in the Soudan. It is probable that abundant wrath and indignation will on this occasion be poured out upon them. Nor will they complain if so it should be; but a partial consolation may be found on reflecting that neither aggressive policy, nor military disaster, nor any gross error in the application of means to ends, has marked this series of difficult proceedings, which, indeed, have greatly redounded to the honour of your Majesty's forces of all ranks and arms. In these remarks which Mr. Gladstone submits with his humble devotion, he has taken it for granted that Khartoum has fallen through the exhaustion of its means of defence. But your Majesty may observe from the telegram that this is uncertain. Both the correspondent's account and that of Major Wortley refer to the delivery of the town by treachery, a contingency which on some previous occasions General Gordon has treated as far from improbable; and which, if the notice existed, was likely to operate quite independently of the particular time at which a relieving force might arrive. The presence of the enemy in force would naturally suggest the occasion, or perhaps even the apprehension of the approach of the British army. In pointing to these considerations, Mr. Gladstone is far from assuming that they are conclusive upon the whole case; in dealing with which the government has hardly ever at any of its stages been furnished sufficiently with those means of judgment which rational men usually require. It may be that, on a retrospect, many errors will appear to have been committed. There are many reproaches, from the most opposite quarters, to which it might be difficult to supply a conclusive answer. Among them, and perhaps among the most difficult, as far as Mr. Gladstone can judge, would be the reproach of those who might argue that our proper business was the protection of Egypt, that it never was in military danger from the Mahdi, and that the most prudent course would have been to provide it with adequate frontier defences, and to assume no responsibility for the lands beyond the desert.

One word more. Writing to one of his former colleagues long after, Mr. Gladstone says:—

Jan. 10, '90.—In the Gordon case we all, and I rather prominently, must continue to suffer in silence. Gordon was a hero, and a hero of heroes; but we ought to have known that a hero of heroes is not the proper person to give effect at a distant point, and in most difficult circumstances, to the views of ordinary men. It was unfortunate that he should claim the hero's privilege by turning upside down and inside out every idea and intention with which he had left England, and for which he had obtained our approval. Had my views about Zobeir prevailed, it would not have removed our difficulties, as Forster would certainly have moved, and with the tories and the Irish have carried, a condemnatory address. My own opinion is that it is harder to justify our doing so much to rescue him, than our not doing more. Had the party reached Khartoum in time, he would not have come away (as I suppose), and the dilemma would have arisen in another form.

In 1890 an application was made to Mr. Gladstone by a certain foreign writer who had undertaken an article on Gordon and his mission. Mr. Gladstone's reply (Jan. 11, '90) runs to this effect:—

I am much obliged by your kind letter and enclosure. I hope you will not think it belies this expression when I say that I feel myself precluded from supplying any material or entering upon any communications for the purpose of self-defence against the charges which are freely made and I believe widely accepted against myself and against the cabinet of 1880-5 in connection with General Gordon. It would be felt in this country, by friends I think in many cases as well as adversaries, that General Gordon's much-lamented death ought to secure him, so far as we are concerned, against the counter-argument which we should have to present on his language and proceedings. On this account you will, I hope, excuse me from entering into the matter. I do not doubt that a true and equitable judgment will eventually prevail.[1]

1 *Belford's Magazine* (New York), Sept. 1890. A French translation of this letter will be found in *L'Égypte et ses Provinces Perdues*, by the recipient, Colonel C. Chaillé-Long Bey (1892), pp. 196-7. He was chief of the staff to Gordon in the Soudan, and consular-agent for the United States at Alexandria. Another book of his, published in 1884, is *The Three Prophets: Chinese Gordon, El Mahdi, and Arabi Pasha.* Burton reviewed Gordon's Khartoum Journals, *Academy*, June 11, 1885.

CHAPTER X

INTERIOR OF THE CABINET

(*1885*)

I am aware that the age is not what we all wish, but I am sure that the only means to check its degeneracy is heartily to concur in whatever is best in our time.—BURKE.

THE year 1885 must be counted as in some respects the severest epoch of Mr. Gladstone's life. The previous twelve months had not ended cheerfully. Sleep, the indispensable restorer, and usually his constant friend, was playing him false. The last entry in his diary was this :—

The year closed with a bad night, only one hour and a half of sleep, which will hardly do to work upon. There is much that I should like to have recorded. . . . But the pressure on me is too great for the requisite recollection. It is indeed a time of *Sturm und Drang*. What with the confusion of affairs, and the disturbance of my daily life by the altered character of my nights, I cannot think in calm, but can only trust and pray.

He was unable to be present at the dinner of the tenants, and his eldest son in his absence dwelt once more on his father's wish to retire, whenever occasion should come, from the public service, or at least from that kind of service to the public which imposed on him such arduous efforts.

One great element of confusion was the sphinx's riddle of Egyptian finance. On his birthday, among a dozen occupations, he says ;—'A little woodcraft for helping sleep ; wrote mem. on Egyptian finance which I hope may help to clear my brain and nerves.' And this was a characteristic way of seeking a cure ; for now and at every time, any task that demanded close thought and firm expression was his surest sedative. More perplexing even than the successive problems of the hour, was the threatened disorganization, not only of his cabinet, but of the party and its future. On January 20 he was forced to London for two Egyptian cabinets, but he speedily returned to Hawarden, whence he immediately wrote a letter to Lord Granville :—

January 22, 1885.—Here I am after a journey of 5½ hours from door to door, through the unsought and ill-deserved kindness of the London and North-Western railway, which entirely spoils me by special service.

There was one part of my conversation of to-day with Hartington which I should like not to leave in any case without record. He referred to the difficulties he had had, and he 'gratefully' acknowledged the considerateness of the cabinet. He said the point always urged upon him was, not to break up the liberal party. But, he said, can we avoid its breaking up, within a very short time after you retire, and ought this consideration therefore to be regarded as of such very great force? I said, my reply is in two sentences. First, I admit that from various symptoms it is not improbable there may be a plan or intention to break up the party. But if a rupture of that kind comes, —this is my second sentence—it will come upon matters of principle, known and understood by the whole country, and your duty will probably be clear and your position unembarrassed. But I entreat you to use your utmost endeavour to avoid bringing about the rupture on one of the points of this Egyptian question, which lies outside the proper business of a government and is beyond its powers, which does not turn upon clear principles of politics, and about which the country understands almost nothing, and cares, for the most part, very little. All this he took without rejoinder.

P.S.—We are going to Holker next week, and Hartington said he would try to come and see me there.

As we have already seen,[1] Mr. Gladstone paid his visit to Holker (January 30), where he found the Duke of Devonshire 'wonderfully well, and kind as ever,' where he was joined by Lord Hartington, and where they together spelled out the cipher telegram (on February 5) bringing the evil news of the fall of Khartoum.

It is not uninteresting to see how the notion of Mr. Gladstone's retirement, now much talked of in his family, affected a friendly, philosophic, and most observant onlooker. Lord Acton wrote to him (February 2):—

You mean that the new parliament, the first of our democratic constitution, shall begin its difficult and perilous course without the services of a leader who has greater experience and authority than any other man. You design to withdraw your assistance when most urgently needed, at the moment of most conservative apprehension and most popular excitement. By the choice of this particular moment for retirement you increase the danger of the critical transition, because nobody stands as you do between the old order of things and the new, or inspires general confidence; and the lieutenants of Alexander are not at their best. Next year's change will appear vast and formidable to the suspicious foreigner, who will be tempted to doubt our identity. It is in the national interest to reduce the outer signs of change, to bridge the apparent chasm, to maintain the traditional character of the state. The unavoidable elements of weakness will be largely and voluntarily aggravated by their untimely coincidence with an event which must, at any time, be a blow to the position of England among the Powers.

[1] Above, p. 305.

Your absence just then must grievously diminish our credit. . . . You alone inspire confidence that what is done for the great masses shall be done with a full sense of economic responsibility. . . . A divided liberal party and a weak conservative party mean the supremacy of the revolutionary Irish. . . .

To this Mr. Gladstone replied :—

10 *Downing Street, Feb.* 11, 1885. . . . Your argument against letting the outworn hack go to grass, depends wholly on a certain proposition, namely this, that there is about to be a crisis in the history of the constitution, growing out of the extension of the franchise, and that it is my duty to do what I can in aiding to steer the ship through the boiling waters of this crisis. My answer is simple. There is no crisis at all in view. There is a process of slow modification and development mainly in directions which I view with misgiving. 'Tory democracy,' the favourite idea on that side, is no more like the conservative party in which I was bred, than it is like liberalism. In fact less. It is demagogism, only a demagogism not ennobled by love and appreciation of liberty, but applied in the worst way, to put down the pacific, law-respecting, economic elements which ennobled the old conservatism, living upon the fomentation of angry passions, and still in secret as obstinately attached as ever to the evil principle of class interests. The liberalism of to-day is better in what I have described as ennobling the old conservatism ; nay, much better, yet far from being good. Its pet idea is what they call construction,—that is to say, taking into the hands of the state the business of the individual man. Both the one and the other have much to estrange me, and have had for many, many years. But, with all this, there is no crisis. I have even the hope that while the coming change may give undue encouragement to 'construction,' it will be favourable to the economic, pacific, law-regarding elements ; and the sense of justice which abides tenaciously in the masses will never knowingly join hands with the fiend of Jingoism. On the whole, I do not abandon the hope that it may mitigate the chronic distemper, and have not the smallest fear of its bringing about an acute or convulsive action. You leave me therefore rooted in my evil mind. . . .

The activity of the left wing, acute, perhaps, but not convulsive, became much more embarrassing than the desire of the right wing to be inactive. Mr. Chamberlain had been rapidly advancing in public prominence, and he now showed that the agitation against the House of Lords was to be only the beginning and not the end. At Ipswich (January 14), he said this country had been called the paradise of the rich, and warned his audience no longer to allow it to remain the purgatory of the poor. He told them that reform of local government must be almost the first reform of the next parliament, and spoke in favour of allotments, the creation of small proprietors, the placing of a small tax on the total property of the taxpayer, and of free education. Mr. Gladstone's attention was drawn from Windsor to these utterances, and he replied (January 22) that though he thought some of them were 'on various grounds

open to grave objection,' yet they seemed to raise no 'definite point on which, in his capacity of prime minister, he was entitled to interfere and lecture the speaker.' A few days later, more terrible things were said by Mr. Chamberlain at Birmingham. He pronounced for the abolition of plural voting, and in favour of payment of members, and manhood suffrage. He also advocated a bill for enabling local communities to acquire land, a graduated income-tax, and the breaking up of the great estates as the first step in land reform. This deliverance was described by not unfriendly critics as 'a little too much the speech of the agitator of the future, rather than of the minister of the present.' Mr. Gladstone made a lenient communication to the orator, to the effect that 'there had better be some explanations among them when they met. To Lord Granville he wrote (January 31):—

> Upon the whole, weak-kneed liberals have caused us more trouble in the present parliament than radicals. But I think these declarations by Chamberlain upon matters which cannot, humanly speaking, become practical before the next parliament, can hardly be construed otherwise than as having a remote and (in that sense) far-sighted purpose which is ominous enough. The opposition can hardly fail in their opportunity, I must add in their duty, to make them matter of attack. Such things will happen casually from time to time, and always with inconvenience —but there is here a degree of method and system which seem to give the matter a new character.

It will be seen from his tone that Mr. Gladstone, in all the embarrassments arising from this source, showed complete freedom from personal irritation. Like the lofty-minded man he was, he imputed no low motives to a colleague because the colleague gave him trouble. He recognised by now that in his cabinet the battle was being fought between old time and new. He did not allow his dislike of some of the new methods of forming public opinion, to prevent him from doing full justice to the energetic and sincere public spirit behind them. He had, moreover, quite enough to do with the demands of the present, apart from signs that were ominous for the future. A year before, in a letter to Lord Granville (March 24, 1884), he had attempted a definition that will, perhaps, be of general interest to politicians of either party complexion. It is, at any rate, characteristic of his subtlety, if that be the right word, in drawing distinctions :—

> What are divisions in a cabinet? In my opinion, differences of views stated, and if need be argued, and then advisedly surrendered with a view to a common conclusion are not 'divisions' in a cabinet. By that phrase I understand unaccommodated differences on matters standing for immediate action.

It was unaccommodated differences of this kind that cost Mr. Disraeli secessions on the Reform bill, and secessions no less serious on his eastern policy, and it is one of the wonders of his

history that Mr. Gladstone prevented secession on the matters now standing for immediate action before his own cabinet. During the four months between the meeting of parliament and the fall of the government, the two great difficulties of the government—Egypt and Ireland—reached their climax.

II

The news of the fall of Khartoum reached England on February 5. One of the least points, as Mr. Gladstone wrote on the day, was that the grievous news would put an end to the government, and so it very nearly did. As was to be expected, Sir Stafford Northcote moved a vote of censure. Mr. Gladstone informed the Queen, on the day before the division, that the aspect of the House was 'dubious and equivocal.' If there was a chance of overthrowing the ministry, he said, the nationalists were pretty sure to act and vote as a body with Sir Stafford. Mr. Forster, Mr. Goschen, and some members of the whig section of the liberal party, were likely either to do the same, or else to abstain. These circumstances looked towards an unfavourable issue, if not in the shape of an adverse majority, yet in the form of a majority too small to enable the government to carry on with adequate authority and efficiency. In the debate, said Mr. Gladstone, Lord Hartington re-stated with measured force the position of the government, and overthrew the contention that had taken a very forward place in the indictment against ministers, that their great offence was the failure to send forward General Graham's force to relieve General Gordon. In the course of this debate Mr. Goschen warned the government that if they flinched from the policy of smashing the Mahdi at Khartoum, he should vote against them. A radical below the gangway upon this went to the party whip and declared, with equal resolution, that if the government insisted on the policy, then it would be for him and others to vote against them. Sir William Harcourt, in a speech of great power, satisfied the gentlemen below the gangway, and only a small handful of the party went into the lobby with the opposition and the Irish. The division was taken at four in the morning (February 28), and the result was that the government which had come in with dazzling radiance five years ago, was worn down to an attenuated majority of fourteen.[1]

When the numbers were declared, Mr. Gladstone said to a colleague on the bench '*That will do.*' Whether this delphic utterance meant that the size of the majority would justify resignation or retention, the colleague was not sure. When the cabinet met at a more mellowed hour in the day, the question between going out of office and staying in, was fully discussed. Mere considerations of ease all pointed one way, for if they held on, they would seem to be dependent on tory support; trouble

[1] For the censure, 288; against, 302.

was brewing with Russia, and the Seats bill would not be through in a hurry. On the other hand, fourteen was majority enough to swear by, the party would be surprised by resignation and discouraged, and retirement would wear the look of a false position. In fact Mr. Gladstone, in spite of his incessant sighs for a hermit's calm, was always for fighting out every position to the last trench. I can think of no exception, and even when the time came ten years later, he thought his successors pusillanimous for retiring on a small scratch defeat on cordite.[1] So now he acted on the principle that with courage cabinets may weather almost any storm. No actual vote was taken, but the numbers for and against retirement were equal, until Mr. Gladstone spoke. He thought that they should try to go on, at least until the Seats bill was through. This was the final decision.

All this brought once more into his mind the general consideration that now naturally much haunted him. He wrote to the Queen (February 27):—

Mr. Gladstone believes that circumstances independent of his own will enable him to estimate, with some impartiality, future political changes, and he is certainly under the impression that, partly from the present composition and temper of the liberal party, and still more, and even much more, from the changes which the conservative party has been undergoing during the last forty years (especially the last ten or fifteen of them), the next change of government may possibly form the introduction to a period presenting some new features, and may mean more than what is usually implied in the transfer of power from one party to another.

Mr. Bright has left a note of a meeting with him at this time:—

March 2, 1885.—Dined with Mrs. Gladstone. After dinner, sat for half an hour or more with Mr. Gladstone, who is ill with cold and hoarseness. Long talk on Egypt. He said he had suffered torment during the continuance of the difficulty in that country. The sending Gordon out a great mistake,—a man totally unsuited for the work he undertook. Mr. Gladstone never saw Gordon. He was appointed by ministers in town, and Gladstone concurred, but had never seen him.

At this moment clouds began to darken the remote horizon on the north-west boundary of our great Indian possessions. The entanglement in the deserts of the Soudan was an obvious temptation to any other Power with policies of its own, to disregard the susceptibilities or even the solid interests of Great Britain. As we shall see, Mr. Gladstone was as little disposed as Chatham or Palmerston to shrink from the defence of the legitimate rights or obligations of his country. But the action of Russia in Afghanistan became an added and rather poignant anxiety.

[1] I often tried to persuade him that our retreat was to be explained apart from pusillanimity, but he would not listen.

As early as March 12 the cabinet found it necessary to consider the menacing look of things on the Afghan frontier. Military necessities in India, as Mr. Gladstone described to the Queen what was in the mind of her ministers, 'might conceivably at this juncture come to overrule the present intentions as to the Soudan as part of them, and it would consequently be imprudent to do anything which could practically extend our obligations in that quarter; as it is the entanglement of the British forces in Soudanese operations, which would most powerfully tempt Russia to adopt aggressive measures.' Three or four weeks later these considerations came to a head. The question put by Mr. Gladstone to his colleagues was this: 'Apart from the defence of Egypt, which no one would propose to abandon, does there appear to be any obligation of honour or any inducement of policy (for myself I should add, is there any moral warrant?) that should lead us in the present state of the demands on the empire, to waste a large portion of our army in fighting against nature, and I fear also fighting against liberty (such liberty as the case admits) in the Soudan?' The assumptions on which the policy had been founded had all broken down. Osman Digna, instead of being readily crushed, had betaken himself to the mountains and could not be got at. The railway from Suakin to Berber, instead of serving the advance on Khartoum in the autumn, could not possibly be ready in time. Berber, instead of being taken before the hot season, could not be touched. Lord Wolseley, instead of being able to proceed with his present forces or a moderate addition, was already asking for twelve more battalions of infantry, with a proportion of other arms.

Mr. Gladstone's own view of this crisis is to be found in a memorandum dated April 9, circulated to the cabinet three or four days before the question came up for final settlement. It is long, but then the case was intricate and the stages various. The reader may at least be satisfied to know that he will have little more of it.[1]

Three cabinets were held on three successive days (April 13-15). On the evening of the first day Mr. Gladstone sent a telegram to the Queen, then abroad, informing her that in the existing state of foreign affairs, her ministers felt bound to examine the question of the abandonment of offensive operations in the Soudan and the evacuation of the territory. The Queen, in reply, was rather vehement against withdrawal, partly on the ground that it would seriously affect our position in India. The Queen had throughout made a great point that the fullest powers should be granted to those on the spot, both Wolseley and Baring having been selected by the government for the offices they held. No question cuts deeper in the art of administering a vast system like that of Great Britain, than

[1] See Appendix.

the influence of the agent at a distant place; nowhere is the balance of peril between too slack a rein from home and a rein too tight, more delicate. Mr. Gladstone, perhaps taught by the experience of the Crimean war, always strongly inclined to the school of the tight rein, though I never heard of any representative abroad with a right to complain of insufficient support from a Gladstone cabinet.[1] On this aspect of matters, so raised by the Queen, Mr. Gladstone had (March 15) expressed his view to Sir Henry Ponsonby:—

> Sir Evelyn Baring was appointed to carry onwards a declared and understood policy in Egypt, when all share in the management of the Soudan was beyond our province. To Lord Wolseley as general of the forces in Egypt, and on account of the arduous character of the work before him, we are bound to render in all military matters a firm and ungrudging support. We have accordingly not scrupled to counsel, on his recommendation, very heavy charges on the country, and military operations of the highest importance. But we have no right to cast on him any responsibility beyond what is strictly military. It is not surely possible that he should decide policy, and that we should adopt and answer for it, even where it is in conflict with the announcements we have made in parliament.

By the time of these critical cabinets in April Sir Evelyn Baring had spontaneously expressed his views, and with a full discussion recommended abandonment of the expedition to Khartoum.

On the second day the matter was again probed and sifted and weighed.

At the third cabinet the decision was taken to retire from the Soudan, and to fix the southern frontier of Egypt at the line where it was left for twelve years, until apprehension of designs of another European power on the upper waters of the Nile was held to demand a new policy. Meanwhile, the policy of Mr. Gladstone's cabinet was adopted and followed by Lord Salisbury when he came into office. He was sometimes pressed to reverse it, and to overthrow the dervish power at Khartoum. To any importunity of this kind, Lord Salisbury's answer was until 1896 unwavering.[2]

It may be worth noting that, in the course of his correspondence with the Queen on the change of policy in the

[1] For instance when Mr. Gladstone fell from office in 1874, Lord Odo Russell wrote to him,—'how sorry I feel at your retirement, and how grateful I am to you for the great advantage and encouragement I have enjoyed while serving under your great administration, in Rome and Berlin.'

[2] 'We do not depart in any degree from the policy of leaving the Soudan. As to the civilisation which the noble and gallant earl [Lord Dundonald] would impose upon us the duty of restoring, it could only be carried out by a large and costly expedition, entailing enormous sacrifice of blood and treasure, and for the present a continuous expenditure, which I do not think the people of this country would sanction. . . . The defence of our retention of Suakin is that it is a very serious obstacle to the renewal and the conduct of that slave trade which is always trying to pass over from Africa into Asia. I do not think that the retention of Suakin is of any advantage to the Egyptian government. If I were to speak purely from the point of view of that government's own interest, I should say, "Abandon Suakin at once."'—Lord Salisbury, in the House of Lords, March 16, 1888.

Soudan, Mr. Gladstone casually indulged in the luxury of a historical parallel. 'He must assure your Majesty,' he wrote in a closing sentence (April 20), 'that at least he has never in any cabinet known any question more laboriously or more conscientiously discussed; and he is confident that the basis of action has not been the mere change in the public view (which, however, is in some cases imperative, as it was with King George III. in the case of the American war), but a deep conviction of what the honour and interest of the empire require them as faithful servants of your Majesty to advise.' The most harmless parallel is apt to be a challenge to discussion, and the parenthesis seems to have provoked some rejoinder from the Queen, for on April 28 Mr. Gladstone wrote to her secretary a letter which takes him away from Khartoum to a famous piece of the world's history :—

To Sir Henry Ponsonby.

In further prosecution of my reply to your letter of the 25th, I advert to your remarks upon Lord North. I made no reference to his conduct, I believe, in writing to her Majesty. What I endeavoured to show was that King George III., without changing his opinion of the justice of his war against the colonies, was obliged to give it up on account of a change of public opinion, and was not open to blame for so doing.

You state to me that Lord North never flinched from his task till it became hopeless, that he then resigned office, but did not change his opinions to suit the popular cry. The implied contrast to be drawn with the present is obvious. I admit none of your three propositions. Lord North did not, as I read history, require to change his opinions to suit the popular cry. They were already in accordance with the popular cry; and it is a serious reproach against him that without sharing his master's belief in the propriety of the war, he long persisted in carrying it on, through subserviency to that master.

Lord North did not resign office for any reason but because he could not help it, being driven from it by some adverse votes of the House of Commons, to which he submitted with great good humour, and probably with satisfaction.

Lord North did not, so far as I know, state the cause to be hopeless. Nor did those who were opposed to him. The movers of the resolution that drove him out of office did not proceed upon that ground. General Conway in his speech advised the retention of the ground we held in the colonies, and the resolution, which expressed the sense of the House as a body, bears a singular resemblance to the announcement we have lately made, as it declares, in its first clause, that the further prosecution of offensive war (on the continent of America) 'will be the means of weakening the efforts of this country against her European enemies,' February 27, 1782. This was followed, on March 4, by an address on the same basis; and by a resolution declaring that any ministers who should advise or attempt to frustrate it should be considered 'as enemies to his Majesty and to this country.' I ought, perhaps, to add that I have never stated, and I do not conceive, that a change in the public opinion of the country is the ground on which the cabinet have founded the change in their advice concerning the Soudan.

III

The reader has by this time perhaps forgotten how Mr. Gladstone good humouredly remonstrated with Lord Palmerston for associating him as one of the same school as Cobden and Bright.[1] The twenty intervening years had brought him more and more into sympathy with those two eminent comrades in good causes, but he was not any less alive to the inconvenience of the label. Speaking in Midlothian after the dissolution in 1880, he denied the cant allegation that to instal the liberals in power would be to hand over the destinies of the country to the Manchester school.[2] 'Abhorring all selfishness of policy,' he said, 'friendly to freedom in every country of the earth, attached to the modes of reason, detesting the ways of force, this Manchester school, this peace-party, has sprung prematurely to the conclusion that wars may be considered as having closed their melancholy and miserable history, and that the affairs of the world may henceforth be conducted by methods more adapted to the dignity of man, more suited both to his strength and to his weakness, less likely to lead him out of the ways of duty, to stimulate his evil passions, to make him guilty before God for inflicting misery on his fellow-creatures.' Such a view, he said, was a serious error, though it was not only a respectable, it was even a noble error. Then he went on, 'However much you may detest war —and you cannot detest it too much—there is no war—except one, the war for liberty—that does not contain in it elements of corruption, as well as of misery, that are deplorable to recollect and to consider; but however deplorable wars may be, they are among the necessities of our condition; and there are times when justice, when faith, when the welfare of mankind, require a man not to shrink from the responsibility of undertaking them. And if you undertake war, so also you are often obliged to undertake measures that may lead to war.'[3]

It is also, if not one of the necessities, at least one of the natural probabilities of our imperfect condition, that when a nation has its forces engaged in war, that is the moment when other nations may press inconvenient questions of their own. Accordingly, as I have already mentioned, when Egyptian distractions were at their height, a dangerous controversy arose with Russia in regard to the frontier of Afghanistan. The question had been first raised a dozen years before without effect, but it was now sharpened into actuality by recent advances of Russia in Central Asia, bringing her into close proximity to the territory of the Ameer. The British and Russian governments appointed a commission to lay down the

[1] Above, vol. i. p. 510.

[2] Edinburgh, March 17, 1880.

[3] In the letter to Mr. Bright (July 14, 1882), already given, Mr. Gladstone went somewhat nearer to the Manchester school, and expressed his agreement with Bright in believing most wars to have been sad errors.

precise line of division between the Turcoman territory recently annexed by Russia, and Afghanistan. The question of instructions to the commission led to infinite discussion, of which no sane man not a biographer is now likely to read one word. While the diplomatists were thus teasing one another, Russian posts and Afghan pickets came closer together, and one day (March 30, 1885) the Russians broke in upon the Afghans at Penjdeh. The Afghans fought gallantly, their losses were heavy, and Penjdeh was occupied by the Russians. 'Whose was the provocation,' as Mr. Gladstone said later, 'is a matter of the utmost consequence. We only know that the attack was a Russian attack. We know that the Afghans suffered in life, in spirit, and in repute. We know that a blow was struck at the credit and the authority of a sovereign—our protected ally—who had committed no offence. All I say is, we cannot in that state of things close this book and say, "We will look into it no more." We must do our best to have right done in the matter.'

Here those who were most adverse to the Soudan policy stood firmly with their leader, and when Mr. Gladstone proposed a vote of credit for eleven millions, of which six and a half were demanded to meet 'the case for preparation' raised by the collision at Penjdeh, he was supported with much more than a mechanical loyalty, alike by the regular opposition and by independent adherents below his own gangway. The speech in which he moved this vote of a war supply (April 27) was an admirable example both of sustained force and lucidity in exposition, and of a combined firmness, dignity, reserve, and right human feeling, worthy of a great minister dealing with an international situation of extreme delicacy and peril. Many anxious moments followed; for the scene of quarrel was far off, details were hard to clear up, diplomacy was sometimes ambiguous, popular excitement was heated, and the language of faction was unmeasured in its violence. The preliminary resolution on the vote of credit had been received with acclamation, but a hostile motion was made from the front opposition bench (May 11), though discord on a high imperial matter was obviously inconvenient enough for the public interest. The mover declared the government to have murdered so many thousand men and to have arranged a sham arbitration, and this was the prelude to other speeches in the same key. Sir S. Northcote supported the motion—one to displace the ministers on a bill that it was the declared intention not to oppose. The division was taken at half-past two in the morning, after a vigorous speech from the prime minister, and the government only counted 290 against 260. In the minority were 42 followers of Mr. Parnell. This premature debate cleared the air. Worked with patience and with vigorous preparations at the back of conciliatory negotiation, the

question was prosecuted to a happy issue, and those who had done their best to denounce Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville for trampling the interests and honour of their country underfoot thought themselves very lucky, when the time came for them to take up the threads, in being able to complete the business by adopting and continuing the selfsame line. With justifiable triumph Mr. Gladstone asked how they would have confronted Russia if 'that insane policy—for so I still must call it'—of Afghan occupation which he had brought to an end in 1880, had been persevered in. In such a case, when Russia came to advance her claim so to adjust boundaries as to make her immediate neighbour to Afghanistan, she would have found the country full of friends and allies, ready to join her in opposing the foreigner and the invader; and she would have been recognised as the liberator.[1]

IV

In some respects Mr. Gladstone was never more wonderful than in the few weeks that preceded the fall of his second administration. Between the middle of April and the middle of May, he jots down with half rueful humour the names of no fewer than nine members of the cabinet who within that period, for one reason or another and at one moment or another, appeared to contemplate resignation; that is to say a majority. Of one meeting he said playfully to a colleague, 'A very fair cabinet to-day—only three resignations.' The large packets of copious letters of this date, written and received, show him a minister of unalterable patience, unruffled self-command; inexhaustible in resource, catching at every straw from the resource of others, indefatigable in bringing men of divergent opinions within friendly reach of one another; of tireless ingenuity in minimising differences and convincing recalcitrants that what they took for a yawning gulf was in fact no more than a narrow trench that any decent political gymnast ought to be ashamed not to be able to vault over. Though he takes it all as being in the day's work, in the confidence of the old jingle, that be the day short or never so long, at length it ringeth to evensong, he does not conceal the burden. To Mrs. Gladstone he writes from Downing Street on May-day :—

Rather oppressed and tired with the magnitude and the complication of subjects on my mind, I did not think of writing by the first post, but I will now supply the omission by making use of the second. As to all the later history of this ministry, which is now entering on its sixth year, it has been a wild romance of politics, with a continual succession of hairbreadth escapes and strange accidents pressing upon one another, and it is only from the number of dangers we have passed through already, that one can be bold enough to hope we may pass also through what yet remain. Some time ago I told you that dark as the sky was

[1] West Calder, November 17, 1885.

with many a thunder-cloud, there were the possibilities of an admirable situation and result, and *for me* a wind-up better than at any time I could have hoped. Russia and Ireland are the two *great* dangers remaining. The 'ray' I mentioned yesterday for the first is by no means extinct to-day, but there is nothing new of a serious character; what there is, is good. So also upon the Irish complications there is more hope than there was yesterday, although the odds may still be heavily against our getting forward unitedly in a satisfactory manner.

On May 2, as he was looking at the pictures in the Academy, Lord Granville brought him tidings of the Russian answer, which meant peace. His short entries tell a brave story :—

May 3, *Sunday.*—Dined at Marlborough House. They were most kind and pleasant. But it is so unsundaylike and unrestful. I am much fatigued in mind and body. Yet very happy. *May* 4.—Wrote to Lord Spencer, Mr. Chamberlain, Sir C. Dilke, Lord Granville. Conclave. H. of C., 4¾-8½ and 9½-2½. Spoke on Russian question. A heavy day. Much knocked up. *May* 5.— . . . Another anxious, very anxious day, and no clearing of the sky as yet. But after all that has come, what may not come? *May* 14, *Ascension Day.*—Most of the day was spent in anxious interviews, and endeavours to bring and keep the members of the cabinet together. *May* 15.—Cabinet 2-4¼. Again stiff. But I must not lose heart.

Difference of opinion upon the budget at one time wore a threatening look, for the radicals disliked the proposed increase of the duty on beer; but Mr. Gladstone pointed out in compensation that on the other hand the equalisation of the death duties struck at the very height of class preference. Mr. Childers was, as always, willing to accommodate difficulties; and in the cabinet the rising storm blew over. Ireland never blows over.

The struggle had gone on for three years. Many murderers had been hanged, though more remained undetected: conspirators had fled; confidence was restored to public officers; society in all its various grades returned externally to the paths of comparative order; and the dire emergency of three years before had been brought to an apparent close. The gratitude in this country to the viceroy who had achieved this seeming triumph over the forces of disorder was such as is felt to a military commander after a hazardous and successful campaign. The country was once more half-conquered, but nothing was advanced, and the other half of the conquest was not any nearer. The scene was not hopeful. There lay Ireland,—squalid, dismal, sullen, dull, expectant, sunk deep in hostile intent. A minority with these misgivings and more felt that the minister's pregnant phrase about the government 'having no moral force behind them' too exactly described a fatal truth.

CHAPTER XI

DEFEAT OF MINISTERS

(May–June 1885)

Οὔπω
τὰν Διὸς ἁρμονίαν
θνατῶν παρεξίασι βουλαί.
ÆSCH. *Prom.* v. 548.

Never do counsels of mortal men thwart the ordered purpose of Zeus.

WHAT was to be the Irish policy? The Crimes Act would expire in August, and the state of parties in parliament and of sections within the cabinet, together with the approach of the general election, made the question whether that Act should be renewed, and if so on what terms, an issue of crucial importance. There were good grounds for suspecting that tories were even then intimating to the Irish that if Lord Salisbury should come into office, they would drop coercion, just as the liberals had dropped it when they came into office in 1880, and like them would rely upon the ordinary law. On May 15 Mr. Gladstone announced in terms necessarily vague, because the new bill was not settled, that they proposed to continue what he described as certain clauses of a valuable and equitable description in the existing Coercion Act.

No parliamentary situation could be more tempting to an astute opposition. The signs that the cabinet was not united were unmistakable. The leader of the little group of four clever men below the gangway on the tory side gave signs that he espied an opportunity. This was one of the occasions that disclosed the intrepidity of Lord Randolph Churchill. He made a speech after Mr. Gladstone's announcement of a renewal of portions of the Crimes Act, not in his place but at a tory club. He declared himself profoundly shocked that so grave an announcement should have been taken as a matter of course. It was really a terrible piece of news. Ireland must be in an awful state, or else the radical members of the cabinet would never have assented to such unanswerable evidence that the

liberal party could not govern Ireland without resort to that arbitrary force which their greatest orators had so often declared to be no remedy. It did not much matter whether the demand was for large powers or for small. Why not put some kind thoughts towards England in Irish minds, by using the last days of this unlucky parliament to abrogate all that harsh legislation which is so odious to England, and which undoubtedly abridges the freedom and insults the dignity of a sensitive and imaginative race? The tory party should be careful beyond measure not to be committed to any act or policy which should unnecessarily wound or injure the feelings of our brothers on the other side of the channel of St. George.[1]

The key to an operation that should at once, with the aid of the disaffected liberals and the Irish, turn out Mr. Gladstone and secure the English elections, was an understanding with Mr. Parnell. The price of such an understanding was to drop coercion, and that price the tory leaders resolved to pay. The manœuvre was delicate. If too plainly disclosed, it might outrage some of the tory rank and file who would loathe an Irish alliance, and it was likely, moreover, to deter some of the disaffected liberals from joining in any motion for Mr. Gladstone's overthrow. Lord Salisbury and his friends considered the subject with 'immense deliberation some weeks before the fall of the government.' They came to the conclusion that in the absence of official information, they could see nothing to warrant a government in applying for a renewal of exceptional powers. That conclusion they profess to have kept sacredly in their own bosoms. Why they should give immense deliberation to a decision that in their view must be worthless without official information, and that was to remain for an indefinite time in mysterious darkness, was never explained when this secret decision some months later was revealed to the public.[2] If there was no intention of making the decision known to the Irishmen, the purpose of so unusual a proceeding would be inscrutable. Was it made known to them? Mr. McCarthy, at the time acting for his leader, has described circumstantially how the Irish were endeavouring to obtain a pledge against coercion; how two members of the tory party, one of them its recognised whip, came to him in succession declaring that they came straight from Lord Salisbury with certain propositions; how he found the assurance unsatisfactory, and asked each of these gentlemen in turn on different nights to go back to Lord Salisbury, and put further questions to him; and how each of them professed to have gone back to Lord Salisbury, to have conferred with him, and to have brought back his personal assurance.[3] On the other hand, it has been uniformly denied

[1] May 20, 1885.
[2] The story was told by Lord R. Churchill in a speech at Sheffield, Sept. 4, 1885.
[3] Mr. McCarthy's speech at Hull, Dec. 15, 1887.

by the tory leaders that there was ever any compact whatever with the Irishmen at this moment. We are not called upon here to decide in a conflict of testimony which turns, after all, upon words so notoriously slippery as pledge, compact, or understanding. It is enough to mark what is not denied, that Lord Salisbury and his confidential friends had resolved, subject to official information, to drop coercion, and that the only visible reason why they should form the resolution at that particular moment was its probable effect upon Mr. Parnell.

II

Let us now return to the ministerial camp. There the whig wing of the cabinet, adhering to Lord Spencer, were for a modified renewal of the Coercion Act, with the balm of a land purchase bill and a limited extension of self-government in local areas. The radical wing were averse to coercion, and averse to a purchase bill, but they were willing to yield a milder form of coercion, on condition that the cabinet would agree not merely to small measures of self-government in local areas, but to the erection of a central board clothed with important administrative functions for the whole of Ireland. In the House of Commons it was certain that a fairly strong radical contingent would resist coercion in any degree, and a liberal below the gangway, who had not been long in parliament but who had been in the press a strong opponent of the coercion policy of 1881, at once gave notice that if proposals were made for the renewal of exceptional law, he should move their rejection. Mr. Gladstone had also to inform the Queen that in what is considered the whig or moderate section of the House there had been recent indications of great dislike to special legislation, even of a mild character, for Ireland. These proceedings are all of capital importance in an eventful year, and bear pretty directly upon the better-known crisis of the year following.

A memorandum by Mr. Gladstone of a conversation between himself and Lord Granville (May 6), will best show his own attitude at this opening of a momentous controversy :—

. . . I told him [Granville] I had given no pledge or indication of my future conduct to Mr. Chamberlain, who, however, knew my opinions to be strong in favour of some plan for a Central Board of Local Government in Ireland on something of an elective basis. . . . Under the circumstances, while the duty of the hour evidently was to study the means of possible accommodation, the present aspect of affairs was that of a probable split, *independently* of the question what course I might individually pursue. My opinions, I said, were very strong and inveterate. I did not calculate upon Parnell and his friends, nor upon Manning and his bishops. Nor was I under any obligation to follow or act with Chamberlain. But independently of all questions of party, of support, and of success, I looked upon the extension of a strong measure

of local government like this to Ireland, now that the question is effectually revived by the Crimes Act, as invaluable itself, and as the only hopeful means of securing crown and state from an ignominious surrender in the next parliament after a mischievous and painful struggle. (I did not advert to the difficulties which will in this session be experienced in carrying on a great battle for the Crimes Act.) My difficulty would lie not in my pledges or declarations (though these, of a public character, are serious), but in my opinions.

Under these circumstances, I said, I take into view the freedom of my own position. My engagements to my colleagues are fulfilled; the great Russian question is probably settled; if we stand firm on the Soudan, we are now released from that embarrassment; and the Egyptian question, if the financial convention be safe, no longer presents any very serious difficulties. I am entitled to lay down my office as having done my work.

Consequently the very last thing I should contemplate is opening the Irish difficulty in connection with my resignation, should I resign. It would come antecedently to any parliamentary treatment of that problem. If thereafter the secession of some members should break up the cabinet, it would leave behind it an excellent record at home and abroad. Lord Granville, while ready to resign his office, was not much consoled by this presentation of the case.

Late in the month (May 23) Mr. Gladstone wrote a long letter to the Queen, giving her 'some idea of the shades of opinion existing in the cabinet with reference to legislation for Ireland.' He thought it desirable to supply an outline of this kind, because the subject was sure to recur after a short time, and was 'likely to exercise a most important influence in the coming parliament on the course of affairs.' The two points on which there was considerable divergence of view were the expiry of the Crimes Act, and the concession of local government. The Irish viceroy was ready to drop a large portion of what Mr. Gladstone called coercive provisions, while retaining provisions special to Ireland, but favouring the efficiency of the law. Other ministers were doubtful whether any special legislation was needed for Irish criminal law. Then on the point whether the new bill should be for two years or one, some, including Mr. Gladstone and Lord Spencer, were for the longer term, others, including Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, for the shorter. At last the whole cabinet agreed to two years. Next for local government,—some held that a liberal move in this region would possibly obviate all need for special criminal legislation, and would at any rate take the sting out of it. To this 'vastly important subject' the prime minister presumed to draw the Queen's special attention, as involving great and far-reaching questions. He did not, he said, regard the differences of leaning in the cabinet upon these matters with either surprise or dismay. Such difficulties were due to inherent difficulties in the matters themselves, and were to be expected from the action of independent and energetic minds in affairs so complex.

There were two main opinions. One favoured the erection of a system of representative county government in Ireland. The other view was that besides the county boards, there should be in addition a central board for all Ireland, essentially municipal and not political; in the main executive and administrative, but also with a power to make bye-laws, raise funds, and pledge public credit in such modes as parliament should provide. The central board would take over education, primary, in part intermediate, and perhaps even higher; poor law and sanitary administration; and public works. The whole charge of justice, police, and prisons would remain with the executive. This board would not be directly elective by the whole Irish people; it would be chosen by the representative county boards. Property, moreover, should have a representation upon it distinct from numbers. This plan, 'first made known to Mr. Gladstone by Mr. Chamberlain,' would, he believed, be supported by six out of the eight Commons ministers. But a larger number of ministers were not prepared to agree to any plan involving the principle of an elective central board as the policy of the cabinet. On account of this preliminary bar, the particular provisions of the policy of a central board were not discussed.

All this, however, was for the moment retrospective and historic, because a fortnight before the letter was written, the policy of the central board, of which Mr. Gladstone so decisively approved, had been killed. A committee of the cabinet was appointed to consider it; some remained stubbornly opposed: as the discussion went on, some changed their minds and, having resisted, at last inclined to acquiesce. Ministers were aware from the correspondence of one of them with an eminent third person, that Mr. Parnell approved the scheme, and in consideration of it would even not oppose a very limited Crimes bill. This, however, was no temptation to all of them; perhaps it had the contrary effect. When it came to the full cabinet, it could not be carried. All the peers except Lord Granville were against it. All the Commoners except Lord Hartington were for it. As the cabinet broke up (May 9), the prime minister said to one colleague, 'Ah, they will rue this day'; and to another, 'Within six years, if it please God to spare their lives, they will be repenting in sackcloth and ashes. Later in the day he wrote to one of them, 'The division of opinion in the cabinet on the subject of local government with a central board for Ireland was so marked, and if I may use the expression, so diametrical, that I dismissed the subject from my mind, and sorrowfully accepted the negative of what was either a majority, or a moiety of the entire cabinet.'

This decision, more profoundly critical than anybody excepting Mr. Gladstone and perhaps Mr. Chamberlain seemed to be aware, left all existing difficulties as acute as ever. In the

middle of May things looked very black. The scheme for a central board was dead, though, wrote Mr. Gladstone to the viceroy, 'for the present only. *It will quickly rise again, as I think, perhaps in larger dimensions.*' Some members of the cabinet, he knew not how many, would resign rather than demand from parliament, without a Central Board bill, the new Coercion Act. If such resignations took place, how was a Coercion bill to be fought through the House, when some liberals had already declared that they would resist it?

On May 15 drafts not only of a Coercion bill, but of a bill for land purchase came before the cabinet. Much objection was taken to land purchase, especially by the two radical leaders, and it was agreed to forego such a bill for the present session. The viceroy gravely lamented this decision, and Mr. Gladstone entered into communication with Mr. Chamberlain and Sir C. Dilke. From them he understood that their main anxiety sprang from a fear lest the future handling of local government should be prejudiced by premature disposal of the question of land purchase, but that in the main they thought the question of local government would not be prejudiced if the purchase bill only provided funds for a year. Under this impression and with a full belief that he was giving effect to the real desire of his colleagues in general to meet the views of Lord Spencer, and finding the prospects of such a bill favourable, Mr. Gladstone proceeded (May 20) to give notice of its introduction. Mr. Chamberlain and Sir C. Dilke took this to be a reversal of the position to which they had agreed, and would not assent to land purchase unless definitely coupled with assurances as to local government. They immediately resigned. The misapprehension was explained, and though the resignations were not formally withdrawn, they were suspended. But the two radical leaders did not conceal their view of the general state of the case, and in very direct terms told Mr. Gladstone that they differed so completely on the questions that were to occupy parliament for the rest of the session, as to feel the continuance of the government of doubtful advantage to the country. In Mr Chamberlain's words written to the prime minister at the time of the misunderstanding (May 21)—

> I feel there has been a serious misapprehension on both sides with respect to the Land Purchase bill, and I take blame to myself if I did not express myself with sufficient clearness. . . . I doubt very much if it is wise or was right to cover over the serious differences of principle that have lately disclosed themselves in the cabinet. I think it is now certain that they will cause a split in the new parliament, and it seems hardly fair to the constituencies that this should only be admitted, after they have discharged their function and are unable to influence the result.

III

'Still the prime minister altogether declined, in his own phrase, to lose heart, and new compromises were invented. Meanwhile he cheerfully went for the Whitsuntide recess to Hawarden, and dived into Lechler's *Wycliffe*, Walpole's *George III.*, Conrad on German Universities, Cooper on the Atonement, and so forth. Among other guests at Hawarden came Lord Wolverton, 'with much conversation ; we opened rather a new view as to my retirement.' What the new view was we do not know, but the conversation was resumed and again resumed, until the unwelcome day (June 4) for return to Downing Street. Before returning, however, Mr. Gladstone set forth his view of the internal crisis in a letter to Lord Hartington :—

To Lord Hartington.

May 30, 1885.—I am sorry but not surprised that your rather remarkable strength should have given way under the pressure of labour or anxiety or both. Almost the whole period of this ministry, particularly the year and half since the defeat of Hicks, and most particularly of all, the four months since the morning when you deciphered the Khartoum telegram at Holker, have been without example in my experience, as to the gravity and diversity of difficulties which they have presented. What I hope is that they will not discourage you, or any of our colleagues, in your anticipations of the future. It appears to me that there is not one of them, viewed in the gross, which has been due to our own action. By viewing in the gross, I mean taking the Egyptian question as one. When we subdivide between Egypt proper and the Soudan, I find what seems to me two grave errors in our management of the Soudan business : the first our *landing* at Suakin, the second the mission of Gordon, or rather the choice of Gordon for that mission. But it sometimes happens that the errors gravest in their consequences are also the most pardonable. And these errors were surely pardonable enough in themselves, without relying on the fact that they were approved by the public opinion of the day and by the opposition. Plenty of other and worse errors have been urged upon us which we have refused or avoided. I do not remember a single good measure recommended by opponents, which we have declined to adopt (or indeed any good measure which they have recommended at all). We certainly have worked hard. I believe that according to the measure of human infirmity, we have done fairly well, but the duties we have had to discharge have been duties, I mean in Egypt and the Soudan, which it was impossible to discharge with the ordinary measure of credit and satisfaction, which were beyond human strength, and which it was very unwise of our predecessors to saddle upon the country.

At this moment we have but two great *desiderata* : the Egyptian Convention and the Afghan settlement (the evacuation of the Soudan being in principle a thing done). Were these accomplished, we should have attained for the empire at home and abroad a position in most respects unusually satisfactory, and both of them *ought* to be near accomplishment. With the Egyptian Convention fairly at work, I should consider the Egyptian question as within a few comparatively easy stages of satisfactory solution.

Now as regards the immediate subject. What if Chamberlain and Dilke, as you seem to anticipate, raise the question of a prospective declaration about local government in Ireland as a condition of their remaining in the cabinet. I consider that question as disposed of for the present (much against my will), and I do not see that any of us, having accepted the decision, can attempt to disturb it. Moreover, their ground will be very weak and narrow; for their actual reason of going, if they go, will be the really small question arising upon the Land Purchase Bill.

I think they will commit a great error if they take this course. It will be straining at the gnat. No doubt it will weaken the party at the election, but I entertain no fear of the immediate effect. Their error will, however, in my view go beyond this. Forgive me if I now speak with great frankness on a matter, one of few, in which I agree with them, and not with you. I am firmly convinced that on local government for Ireland they hold a winning position; which by resignation now they will greatly compromise. You will all, I am convinced, have to give what they recommend; at the least what they recommend.

There are two differences between them and me on this subject. First as to the matter; I go rather further than they do; for I would undoubtedly make a *beginning* with the Irish police. Secondly as to the *ground*; here I differ seriously. I do not reckon with any confidence upon Manning or Parnell; I have never looked much in Irish matters at negotiation or the conciliation of leaders. I look at the question in itself, and I am deeply convinced that the measure in itself will (especially if accompanied with similar measures elsewhere, *e.g.* in Scotland) be good for the country and the empire; I do not say unmixedly good, but with advantages enormously outweighing any drawbacks.

Apart from these differences, and taking their point of view, I think they ought to endeavour to fight the election with you; and in the *new state of affairs* which will be presented after the dissolution, try and see what effect may be produced upon your mind, and on other minds, when you have to look at the matter *cominus* and not *eminus*, as actual, and not as hypothetical. I gave Chamberlain a brief hint of these speculations when endeavouring to work upon him; otherwise I have not mentioned them to any one.

IV

On the day of his return to London from Hawarden Mr. Gladstone had an interview with the two ministers with whom on the merits he was most disposed to agree, though he differed strongly from them as to tactics. Resignations were still only suspended, yet the prospects of compromise were hopeful. At a cabinet held on the following day (June 5) it was agreed that he should in the course of a week give notice of a bill to take the place of the expiring Crimes Act. The point left open was whether the operative provisions of such an Act—agreed on some time before—should not be brought into operation without some special act of the executive government, by proclamation, order in council, or otherwise. Local government was still left open. Lord Spencer crossed over from Ireland on the night of June 7, and the cabinet met next day. All differences were narrowed down to the point whether the enactments against

intimidation should be inoperative unless and until the lord lieutenant should waken them into life by proclamation. As it happened, intimidation had been for a considerable time upon the increase—from which it might be inferred either, on the one side, that coercion failed in its object, or, on the other, that more coercion was still indispensable. The precise state in which matters were left at the eleventh hour before the crisis, now swiftly advancing, was set out by Mr. Gladstone in a letter written by him to the Queen in the autumn (October 5), when he was no longer her Majesty's minister :—

To the Queen.

. . . He has perceived that in various quarters misapprehension prevails as to the point at which the deliberations of the late cabinet on the question of any renewal of, or substitution for, the Crimes Act in Ireland had arrived when their financial defeat on the 8th of June caused the tender of their resignation.

Mr. Gladstone prays your Majesty's gracious permission to remove this misapprehension by simply stating that which occurred in the cabinet at its latest meetings, with reference to this particular question. Substantially it would be a repetition, or little more (and without any mention of names), of his latest reports to your Majesty, to the effect—

1. That the cabinet had long before arrived at the conclusion that the coercion clauses of the Act, properly so called, might be safely abandoned.

2. With regard to the other clauses, which might be generally described as procedure clauses, they intended as a rule to advise, not their absolute re-enactment, but that the viceroy should be empowered to bring them into action, together or separately, as and when he might see cause.

3. But that, with respect to the intimidation or boycotting provisions, it still remained for consideration whether they should thus be left subject to executive discretion, or whether, as the offence had not ceased, they should, as an effective instrument of repression, remain in direct and full operation.

It is worth noticing here as a signal instance of Mr. Gladstone's tenacious and indomitable will after his defeat, that in a communication to the Queen four days later (June 12), he stated that the single outstanding point of difference on the Crimes bill was probably in a fair way of settlement, but that even if the dissent of the radical members of the cabinet had become operative, it was his firm intention to make new arrangements for filling the vacant offices and carrying on the government. The overthrow came in a different way. The deliberations thus summarised had been held under the shadow of a possibility, mentioned to the Queen in the report of this last cabinet, of a coalition between the tories and the Irish nationalists, in order to put an end to the existence of the government on their budget. This cloud at last burst, though Mr. Gladstone at any rate with his usual invincible

adherence to the salutary rule never to bid good morrow to the devil until you meet him, did not strongly believe in the risk. The diary sheds no light on the state of his expectations :—

June 6. . . . Read Amiel's *Journal Intime*. Queen's birthday dinner, 39 ; went very well. Much conversation with the Prince of Wales, who was handy and pleasant even beyond his wont. Also had some speech of his son, who was on my left. *June* 7, *Trinity Sunday*.—Chapel Royal at noon and 5.30. Wrote . . . Saw Lord Granville ; ditto *cum* Kimberley. Read Amiel. Edersheim on Old Testament. *June* 8.—Wrote, etc. . . . Pitiless rain. Cabinet, 2-3¾. . . . Spoke on budget. Beaten by 264 : 252. Adjourned the House. This is a considerable event.

The amendment that led to this 'considerable event' was moved by Sir Michael Hicks Beach. The two points raised by the fatal motion were, first, the increased duty on beer and spirits without a corresponding increase on wine ; and, second, the increase of the duty on real property while no relief was given to rates. The fiscal issue is not material. What was ominous was the alliance that brought about the result.

The defeat of the Gladstone government was the first success of a combination between tories and Irish, that proved of cardinal importance to policies and parties for several critical months to come. By a coincidence that cut too deep to be mere accident, divisions in the Gladstone cabinet found their counterpart in insurrection among the tory opposition. The same general forces of the hour, working through the energy, ambition, and initiative of individuals, produced the same effect in each of the two parties ; the radical programme of Mr. Chamberlain was matched by the tory democracy of Lord Randolph Churchill ; each saw that the final transfer of power from the ten-pound householder to artisans and labourers would rouse new social demands ; each was aware that Ireland was the electoral pivot of the day, and while one of them was wrestling with those whom he stigmatized as whigs, the other by dexterity and resolution overthrew his leaders as 'the old gang.'

CHAPTER XII

ACCESSION OF LORD SALISBURY

(*1885*)

Politics are not a drama where scenes follow one another according to a methodical plan, where the actors exchange forms of speech, settled beforehand : politics are a conflict of which chance is incessantly modifying the whole course.—SOREL.

In tendering his resignation to the Queen on the day following his parliamentary defeat (June 9), and regretting that he had been unable to prepare her for the result, Mr. Gladstone explained that though the government had always been able to cope with the combined tory and nationalist oppositions, what had happened on this occasion was the silent withdrawal, under the pressure of powerful trades, from the government ranks of liberals who abstained from voting, while six or seven actually voted with the majority. 'There was no previous notice,' he said, 'and it was immediately before the division that Mr. Gladstone was apprised for the first time of the likelihood of a defeat.' The suspicious hinted that ministers, or at least some of them, unobtrusively contrived their own fall. Their supporters, it was afterwards remarked, received none of those imperative adjurations to return after dinner that are usual on solemn occasions ; else there could never have been seventy-six absentees. The majority was composed of members of the tory party, six liberals, and thirty-nine nationalists. Loud was the exultation of the latter contingent at the prostration of the coercion system. What was natural exultation in them, may have taken the form of modest satisfaction among many liberals, that they could go to the country without the obnoxious label of coercion tied round their necks. As for ministers, it was observed that if in the streets you saw a man coming along with a particularly elastic step and a joyful frame of countenance, ten to one on coming closer you would find that it was a member of the late cabinet.[1]

The ministerial crisis of 1885 was unusually prolonged, and it was curious. The victory had been won by a coalition with

[1] Duke of Argyll, July 10, 1885.

the Irish; its fruits could only be reaped with Irish support; and Irish support was to the tory victors both dangerous and compromising. The normal process of a dissolution was thought to be legally impossible, because by the redistribution bill the existing constituencies were for the most part radically changed; and a new parliament chosen on the old system of seats and franchise, even if it were legally possible, would still be empty of all semblance of moral authority. Under these circumstances, some in the tory party argued that instead of taking office, it would be far better for them to force Mr. Gladstone and his cabinet to come back, and leave them to get rid of their internal differences and their Irish embarrassments as they best could. Events were soon to demonstrate the prudence of these wary counsels. On the other hand, the bulk of the tory party like the bulk of any other party was keen for power, because power is the visible symbol of triumph over opponents, and to shrink from office would discourage their friends in the country in the electoral conflict now rapidly approaching.

The Queen meanwhile was surprised (June 10) that Mr. Gladstone should make his defeat a vital question, and asked whether, in case Lord Salisbury should be unwilling to form a government, the cabinet would remain. To this Mr. Gladstone replied that to treat otherwise an attack on the budget, made by an ex-cabinet minister with such breadth of front and after all the previous occurrences of the session, would be contrary to every precedent, – for instance, the notable case of December 1852, – and it would undoubtedly tend to weaken and lower parliamentary government.[1] If an opposition defeated a government, they must be prepared to accept the responsibility of their action. As to the second question, he answered that a refusal by Lord Salisbury would obviously change the situation. On this, the Queen accepted the resignations (June 11), and summoned Lord Salisbury to Balmoral. The resignations were announced to parliament the next day. Remarks were made at the time, indeed by the Queen herself, at the failure of Mr. Gladstone to seek the royal presence. Mr. Gladstone's explanation was that, viewing 'the probably long reach of Lord Hartington's life into the future,' he thought that he would be more useful in conversation with her Majesty than 'one whose ideas might be unconsciously coloured by the limited range of the prospect before him,' and Lord Hartington prepared to comply with the request that he should repair to Balmoral. The visit was eventually not thought necessary by the Queen.

In his first audience Lord Salisbury stated that though he

[1] As the reader will remember (vol. i. pp. 324-327), on Dec. 16, 1852, Mr. Disraeli's motion for imposing a house duty of a shilling in the pound was rejected by 305 to 286. Mr. Gladstone also referred to the case of the expulsion of the whigs by Peel. On May 18, 1841, after eight nights' debate, the government were defeated by a majority of 36 on their budget proposals in regard to sugar. Ministers not resigning, Sir Robert Peel moved a vote of want of confidence on May 27, which was carried by a majority of 1 (312-311), June 4, 1841. Parliament thereupon was dissolved.

and his friends were not desirous of taking office, he was ready to form a government; but in view of the difficulties in which a government formed by him would stand, confronted by a hostile majority and unable to dissolve, he recommended that Mr. Gladstone should be invited to reconsider his resignation. Mr. Gladstone, however (June 13), regarded the situation and the chain of facts that had led up to it, as being so definite, when coupled with the readiness of Lord Salisbury to undertake an administration, that it would be a mere waste of valuable time for him to consult his colleagues as to the resumption of office. Then Lord Salisbury sought assurances of Mr. Gladstone's support, as to finance, parliamentary time, and other points in the working of executive government. These assurances neither Mr. Gladstone's own temperament, nor the humour of his friends and his party—for the embers of the quarrel with the Lords upon the franchise bill were still hot—allowed him to give, and he founded himself on the precedent of the communications of December 1845 between Peel and Russell. In this default of assurances, Lord Salisbury thought that he should render the Queen no useful service by taking office. So concluded the first stage.

Though declining specific pledges, Mr. Gladstone now wrote to the Queen (June 17) that in the conduct of the necessary business of the country, he believed there would be no disposition to embarrass her ministers. Lord Salisbury, however, and his colleagues were unanimous in thinking this general language insufficient. The interregnum continued. On the day following (June 18), Mr. Gladstone had an audience at Windsor, whither the Queen had now returned. It lasted over three-quarters of an hour. 'The Queen was most gracious and I thought most reasonable.' (*Diary.*) He put down in her presence some heads of a memorandum to assist her recollection, and the one to which she rightly attached most value was this:—'In my opinion,' Mr. Gladstone wrote, 'the whole value of any such declaration as the present circumstances permit, really depends upon the spirit in which it is given and taken. For myself and any friend of mine, I can only say that the spirit in which we should endeavour to interpret and apply the declaration I have made, would be the same spirit in which we entered upon the recent conferences concerning the Seats bill.' To this declaration his colleagues on his return to London gave their entire and marked approval, but they would not compromise the liberty of the House of Commons by further and particular pledges.

It was sometimes charged against Mr. Gladstone that he neglected his duty to the crown, and abandoned the Queen in a difficulty. This is wholly untrue. On June 20, Sir Henry Ponsonby called and opened one or two aspects of the position, among them these:—

1. Can the Queen do anything more?

I answered, As you ask me, it occurs to me that it might help Lord Salisbury's going on, were she to make reference to No. 2 of my memorandum [the paragraph just quoted], and to say that in her judgment he would be safe in receiving it in a spirit of trust.

2. If Lord Salisbury fails, may the Queen rely on you?

I answered that on a previous day I had said that if S. failed, the situation would be altered. I hoped, and on the whole thought, he would go on. But if he did not? I could not promise or expect smooth water. The movement of questions such as the Crimes Act and Irish Local Government might be accelerated. But my desire would be to do my best to prevent the Queen being left without a government.[1]

Mr. Gladstone's view of the position is lucidly stated in the following memorandum, like the others, in his own hand (June 21):—

1. I have endeavoured in my letters (*a*) to avoid all controversial matter; (*b*) to consider not what the incoming ministers had a right to ask, but what it was possible for us in a spirit of conciliation to give.

2. In our opinion there was no right to demand from us anything whatever. The declarations we have made represent an extreme of concession. The conditions required, *e.g.* the first of them [control of time], place in abeyance the liberties of parliament, by leaving it solely and absolutely in the power of the ministers to determine on what legislative or other questions (except supply) it shall be permitted to give a judgment. The House of Commons may and ought to be disposed to facilitate the progress of all necessary business by all reasonable means as to supply and otherwise, but would deeply resent any act of ours by which we agreed beforehand to the extinction of its discretion.

The difficulties pleaded by Lord Salisbury were all in view when his political friend, Sir M. H. Beach, made the motion which, as we apprised him, would if carried eject us from office, and are simply the direct consequences of their own action. If it be true that Lord Salisbury loses the legal power to advise and the crown to grant a dissolution, that cannot be a reason for leaving in the hands of the executive an absolute power to stop the action (except as to supply) of the legislative and corrective power of the House of Commons. At the same time these conditions do not appear to me to attain the end proposed by Lord Salisbury, for it would still be left in the power of the House to refuse supplies, and thereby to bring about in its worst form the difficulty which he apprehends.

It looked for a couple of days as if he would be compelled to return, even though it would almost certainly lead to disruption of the liberal cabinet and party.[2] The Queen, acting apparently on Mr. Gladstone's suggestion of June 20, was ready to express her confidence in Mr. Gladstone's assurance that there would be no disposition on the part of himself or his friends to embarrass new ministers. By this expression

[1] Memo. by Mr. Gladstone, on a sheet of notepaper, June 20, 1885.

[2] Mr. Gladstone was reminded by a colleague that when Sir Robert Peel resumed office in 1845, at the request of the Queen, he did so before and without consultation with his colleagues. In the end they all, excepting Lord Stanley, supported him.

of confidence, the Queen would thus make herself in some degree responsible as it were for the action of the members of the defeated Gladstone government in the two Houses. Still Lord Salisbury's difficulties—and some difficulties are believed to have arisen pretty acutely within the interior conclaves of his own party—remained for forty-eight hours insuperable. His retreat to Hatfield was taken to mark a second stage in the interregnum.

June 22 is set down in the diary as 'a day of much stir and vicissitude.' Mr. Gladstone received no fewer than six visits during the day from Sir Henry Ponsonby, whose activity, judgment, and tact in these duties of infinite delicacy were afterwards commemorated by Lord Granville in the House of Lords.[1] He brought up from Windsor the draft of a letter that might be written by the Queen to Lord Salisbury, testifying to her belief in the sincerity and loyalty of Mr. Gladstone's words. Sir Henry showed the draft to Mr. Gladstone, who said that he could not be party to certain passages in it, though willing to agree to the rest. The draft so altered was submitted to Lord Salisbury; he demanded modification, placing a more definite interpretation on the words of Mr. Gladstone's previous letters to the Queen. Mr. Gladstone was immovable throughout the day in declining to admit any modifications in the sense desired; nor would he consent to be privy to any construction or interpretation placed upon his words which Lord Salisbury, with no less tenacity than his own, desired to extend.

At 5.40 [June 22] Sir H. Ponsonby returned for a fifth interview, his infinite patience not yet exhausted. . . . He said the Queen believed the late government did not wish to come back. I simply reminded him of my previous replies, which he remembered, nearly as follows:—That if Lord Salisbury failed, the situation would be altered. That I could not in such a case promise her Majesty smooth water. That, however, a great duty in such circumstances lay upon any one holding my situation, to use his best efforts so as, *quoad* what depended upon him, not to leave the Queen without a government. I think he will now go to Windsor.—*June* 22, '85, 6 P.M.

The next day (June 23), the Queen sent on to Lord Salisbury the letter written by Mr. Gladstone on June 21, containing his opinion that facilities of supply might reasonably be provided, without placing the liberties of the House of Commons in abeyance, and further, his declaration that he felt sure there was no idea of withholding ways and means, and that there was no danger to be apprehended on that score. In forwarding this letter, the Queen expressed to Lord Salisbury her earnest desire to bring to a close a crisis calculated to endanger the best interests of the state; and she felt no hesitation in further communicating to Lord Salisbury her opinion that he might reasonably accept Mr. Gladstone's assurances. In deference to

[1] June 25, 1885.

these representations from the Queen, Lord Salisbury felt it his duty to take office, the crisis ended, and the tory party entered on the first portion of a term of power that was destined, with two rather brief interruptions, to be prolonged for many years.[1] In reviewing this interesting episode in the annals of the party system, it is impossible not to observe the dignity in form, the patriotism in substance, the common-sense in result, that marked the proceedings alike of the sovereign and of her two ministers.

II

After accepting Mr. Gladstone's resignation the Queen, on June 13, proffered him a peerage :—

The Queen to Mr. Gladstone.

Mr. Gladstone mentioned in his last letter but one, his intention of proposing some honours. But before she considers these, she wishes to offer him an Earldom, as a mark of her recognition of his long and distinguished services, and she believes and thinks he will thereby be enabled still to render great service to his sovereign and country—which if he retired, as he has repeatedly told her of late he intended to do shortly,—he could not. The country would doubtless be pleased at any signal mark of recognition of Mr. Gladstone's long and eminent services, and the Queen believes that it would be beneficial to his health,—no longer exposing him to the pressure from without, for more active work than he ought to undertake. Only the other day—without reference to the present events—the Queen mentioned to Mrs. Gladstone at Windsor the advantage to Mr. Gladstone's health of a removal from one House to the other, in which she seemed to agree. The Queen trusts, therefore, that Mr. Gladstone will accept the offer of an earldom, which would be very gratifying to her.

The outgoing minister replied on the following day :—

Mr. Gladstone offers his humble apology to your Majesty. It would not be easy for him to describe the feelings with which he has read your Majesty's generous, most generous letter. He prizes every word of it, for he is fully alive to all the circumstances which give it value. It will be a precious possession to him and to his children after him. All that could recommend an earldom to him, it already has given him. He remains, however, of the belief that he ought not to avail himself of this most gracious offer. Any service that he can render, if small, will, however, be greater in the House of Commons than in the House of Lords; and it has never formed part of his views to enter that historic chamber, although he does not share the feeling which led Sir R. Peel to put upon record what seemed a perpetual or almost a perpetual self-denying ordinance for his family.

When the circumstances of the state cease, as he hopes they may ere long, to impose on him any special duty, he will greatly covet that

[1] The correspondence with the Queen up to June 21 was read by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons on June 24, and Lord Salisbury made his statement in the House of Lords on the next day. Mr. Gladstone told the House of Commons that he omitted one or two sentences from one of his letters, as having hardly any bearing on the real points of the correspondence. The omitted sentences related to the Afghan frontier, and the state of the negotiations with Russia.

interval between an active career and death, which the profession of politics has already appeared to him especially to require. There are circumstances connected with the position of his family, which he will not obtrude upon your Majesty, but which, as he conceives, recommend in point of prudence the personal intention from which he has never swerved. He might hesitate to act upon the motives to which he has last adverted, grave as they are, did he not feel rooted in the persuasion that the small good he may hope hereafter to effect, can best be prosecuted without the change in his position. He must beg your Majesty to supply all that is lacking in his expression from the heart of profound and lasting gratitude.

To Lord Granville, the nearest of his friends, he wrote on the same day :—

I send you herewith a letter from the Queen which moves and almost upsets me. It must have cost her much to write, and it is really a pearl of great price. Such a letter makes the subject of it secondary—but though it would take me long to set out my reasons, I remain firm in the intention to accept nothing for myself.

Lord Granville replied that he was not surprised at the decision. 'I should have greatly welcomed you,' he said, 'and under some circumstances it might be desirable, but I think you are right now.'

Here is Mr. Gladstone's letter to an invaluable occupant of the all-important office of private secretary :—

To Mr. E. W. Hamilton.

June 30, 1885.—Since you have in substance (and in form ?) received the appointment [at the Treasury], I am unmuzzled, and may now express the unbounded pleasure which it gives me, together with my strong sense (not disparaging any one else) of your desert. The modesty of your letter is as remarkable as its other qualities, and does you the highest honour. I can accept no tribute from you, or from any one, with regard to the office of private secretary under me except this, that it has always been made by me a strict and severe office, and that this is really the only favour I have ever done you, or any of your colleagues to whom in their several places and measures I am similarly obliged.

As to your services to me they have been simply indescribable. No one I think could dream, until by experience he knew, to what an extent in these close personal relations devolution can be carried, and how it strengthens the feeble knees and thus also sustains the fainting heart.

III

The declaration of the Irish policy of the new government was made to parliament by no less a personage than the lord-lieutenant.[1] The prime minister had discoursed on frontiers in Asia and frontiers in Africa, but on Ireland he was silent.

[1] This proceeding was so unusual as to be almost without a precedent. Lord Mulgrave had addressed the House of Lords in 1837, and Lord Clarendon in 1850. But on each of these occasions the viceroy's administration had been the object of vigorous attack, and no one but the viceroy himself was capable of making an effective parliamentary defence.

Lord Carnarvon, on the contrary, came forward voluntarily with a statement of policy, and he opened it on the broadest general lines. His speech deserves as close attention as any deliverance of this memorable period. It laid down the principles of that alternative system of government, with which the new ministers formally challenged their predecessors. Ought the Crimes Act to be re-enacted as it stood; or in part; or ought it to be allowed to lapse? These were the three courses. Nobody, he thought, would be for the first, because some provisions had never been put in force; others had been put in force but found useless; and others again did nothing that might not be done just as well under the ordinary law. The re-enactment of the whole statute, therefore, was dismissed. But the powers for changing venue at the discretion of the executive; for securing special juries at the same discretion; for holding secret inquiry without an accused person; for dealing summarily with charges of intimidation—might they not be continued? They were not unconstitutional, and they were not opposed to legal instincts. No, all quite true; but then the Lords should not conceal from themselves that their re-enactment would be in the nature of special or exceptional legislation. He had been looking through coercion Acts, he continued, and had been astonished to find that ever since 1847, with some very short intervals hardly worth mentioning, Ireland had lived under exceptional and coercive legislation. What sane man could admit this to be a satisfactory or a wholesome state of things? Why should not they try to extricate themselves from this miserable habit, and aim at some better solution. 'Just as I have seen in English colonies across the sea a combination of English, Irish, and Scotch settlers bound together in loyal obedience to the law and the crown, and contributing to the general prosperity of the country, so I cannot conceive that there is any irreconcilable bar here in their native home and in England to the unity and the amity of the two nations.' He went to his task individually with a perfectly free, open, and unprejudiced mind, to hear, to question, and, as far as might be, to understand. 'My Lords, I do not believe that with honesty and single-mindedness of purpose on the one side, and with the willingness of the Irish people on the other, it is hopeless to look for some satisfactory solution of this terrible question. My Lords, these I believe to be the opinions and the views of my colleagues.'[1]

This remarkable announcement, made in the presence of the prime minister, in the name of the cabinet as a whole, and by a man of known purity and sincerity of character, was taken to be an express renunciation, not merely of the policy of which notice had been given by the outgoing administration,

[1] July 6, 1885. *Hansard*, 298, p. 1659.

but of coercion as a final instrument of imperial rule. It was an elaborate repudiation in advance of that panacea of firm and resolute government, which became so famous before twelve months were over. It was the suggestion, almost in terms, that a solution should be sought in that policy which had brought union both within our colonies, and between the colonies and the mother country, and men did not forget that this suggestion was being made by a statesman who had carried federation in Canada, and tried to carry it in South Africa. We cannot wonder that upon leading members of the late government, and especially upon the statesman who had been specially responsible for Ireland, the impression was startling and profound. Important members of the tory party hurried from Ireland to Arlington Street, and earnestly warned their leader that he would never be able to carry on with the ordinary law. They were coldly informed that Lord Salisbury had received quite different counsel from persons well acquainted with the country.

The new government were not content with renouncing coercion for the present. They cast off all responsibility for its practice in the past. Ostentatiously they threw overboard the viceroy with whom the only fault that they had hitherto found, was that his sword was not sharp enough. A motion was made by the Irish leader calling attention to the maladministration of the criminal law by Lord Spencer. Forty men had been condemned to death, and in twenty-one of these cases the capital sentence had been carried out. Of the twenty-one executions six were savagely impugned, and Mr. Parnell's motion called for a strict inquiry into these and some other convictions, with a view to the full discovery of truth and the relief of innocent persons. The debate soon became famous from the principal case adduced, as the Maamtrasna debate. The topic had been so copiously discussed as to occupy three full sittings of the House in the previous October. The lawyer who had just been made Irish chancellor, at that time pronounced against the demand. In substance the new government made no fresh concession. They said that if memorials or statements were laid before him, the viceroy would carefully attend to them. No minister could say less. But incidental remarks fell from the government that created lively alarm in tories and deep disgust in liberals. Sir Michael Hicks Beach, then leader of the House, told them that while believing Lord Spencer to be a man of perfect honour and sense of duty, 'he must say very frankly that there was much in the Irish policy of the late government which, though in the absence of complete information he did not condemn, he should be very sorry to make himself responsible for.'[1] An even more important minister emphasised the severance of the new policy from the

[1] Sir M. H. Beach, July 17, 1885. *Hansard*, 299, p. 1085.

old. 'I will tell you,' cried Lord Randolph Churchill, 'how the present government is foredoomed to failure. They will be foredoomed to failure if they go out of their way unnecessarily to assume one jot or tittle of the responsibility for the acts of the late administration. It is only by divesting ourselves of all responsibility for the acts of the late government, that we can hope to arrive at a successful issue.'[1]

Tory members got up in angry fright, to denounce this practical acquiescence by the heads of their party in what was a violent Irish attack not only upon the late viceroy, but upon Irish judges, juries, and law officers. They remonstrated against 'the pusillanimous way' in which their two leaders had thrown over Lord Spencer. 'During the last three years,' said one of these protesting tories, 'Lord Spencer has upheld respect for law at the risk of his life from day to day, with the sanction, with the approval, and with the acknowledgment inside and outside of this House, of the country, and especially of the conservative party. Therefore I for one will not consent to be dragged into any implied, however slight, condemnation of Lord Spencer, because it happens to suit the exigencies of party warfare.'[2] This whole transaction disgusted plain men, tory and liberal alike; it puzzled calculating men; and it had much to do with the silent conversion of important and leading men.

The general sentiment about the outgoing viceroy took the form of a banquet in his honour (July 24), and some three hundred members of the two Houses attended, including Lord Hartington, who presided, and Mr. Bright. The two younger leaders of the radical wing who had been in the late cabinet neither signed the invitation nor were present. But on the same evening in another place, Mr. Chamberlain recognised the high qualities and great services of Lord Spencer, though they had not always agreed upon details. He expressed, however, his approval both of the policy and of the arguments which had led the new government to drop the Crimes Act. At the same time he denounced the 'astounding tergiversation' of ministers, and energetically declared that 'a strategic movement of that kind, executed in opposition to the notorious convictions of the men who effected it, carried out for party purposes and party purposes alone, is the most flagrant instance of political dishonesty this country has ever known.' Lord Hartington a few weeks later told his constituents that the conduct of the government, in regard to Ireland, had dealt a heavy blow 'both at political morality, and at the cause of order in Ireland.' The severity of such judgments from these two weighty statesmen testifies to the grave importance of the new departure.

The enormous change arising from the line adopted by the government was visible enough even to men of less keen vision

1 *Hansard*, 299. p. 1098. 2 *Ibid.* p. 1119.

than Mr. Gladstone, and it was promptly indicated by him in a few sentences in a letter to Lord Derby on the very day of the Maamtrasna debate :—

Within the last two or three weeks, he wrote, the situation has undergone important changes. I am not fully informed, but what I know looks as if the Irish party so-called in parliament, excited by the high biddings of Lord Randolph, had changed what was undoubtedly Parnell's ground until within a very short time back. It is now said that a central board will not suffice, and that there must be a parliament. This I suppose may mean the repeal of the Act of Union, or may mean an Austro-Hungarian scheme, or may mean that Ireland is to be like a great colony such as Canada. Of all or any of these schemes I will now only say that, of course, they constitute an entirely new point of departure and raise questions of an order totally different to any that are involved in a central board appointed for local purposes.

Lord Derby recording his first impressions in reply (July 19) took the rather conventional objection made to most schemes on all subjects, that it either went too far or did not go far enough. Local government he understood, and home rule he understood, but a quasi-parliament in Dublin, not calling itself such though invested with most of the authority of a parliament, seemed to him to lead to the demand for fuller recognition. If we were forced, he said, to move beyond local government as commonly understood, he would rather have Ireland treated like Canada. 'But the difficulties every way are enormous.' On this Mr. Gladstone wrote a little later to Lord Granville (Aug. 6) :—

As far as I can learn, both you and Derby are on the same lines as Parnell, in rejecting the smaller and repudiating the larger scheme. It would not surprise me if he were to formulate something on the subject. For my own part I have seen my way pretty well as to the particulars of the minor and rejected plan, but the idea of the wider one puzzles me much. At the same time, *if* the election gives a return of a decisive character, the sooner the subject is dealt with the better.

So little true is it to say that Mr. Gladstone only thought of the possibility of Irish autonomy after the election.

IV

Apart from public and party cares, the bodily machinery gave trouble, and the fine organ that had served him so nobly for so long showed serious signs of disorder.

To Lord Richard Grosvenor.

July 14.—After two partial examinations, a thorough examination of my throat (larynx *versus* pharynx) has been made to-day by Dr. Semon in the presence of Sir A. Clark, and the result is rather bigger than I had expected. It is, that I have a fair chance of real recovery provided I keep silent almost like a Trappist, but all treatment would be nugatory without this rest ; that the other alternative is nothing dangerous, but

merely the constant passage of the organ from bad to worse. He asked what demands the H. of C. would make on me. I answered about three speeches of about five minutes each, but he was not satisfied and wished me to get rid of it altogether, which I must do, perhaps saying instead a word by letter to some friend. Much time has almost of necessity been lost, but I must be rigid for the future, and even then I shall be well satisfied if I get back before winter to a natural use of the voice in conversation. This imports a considerable change in the course of my daily life. Here it is difficult to organize it afresh. At Hawarden I can easily do it, but there I am at a distance from the best aid. I am disposed to 'top up,' with a sea voyage, but this is No. 3—Nos. 1 and 2 being rest and then treatment.

The sea voyage that was to 'top up' the rest and the treatment began on August 8, when the Gladstones became the guests of Sir Thomas and Lady Brassey on the *Sunbeam*. They sailed from Greenhithe to Norway, and after a three weeks' cruise, were set ashore at Fort George on September 1. Mr. Gladstone made an excellent tourist; was full of interest in all he saw; and, I dare say, drew some pleasure from the demonstrations of curiosity and admiration that attended his presence from the simple population wherever he moved. Long expeditions with much climbing and scrambling were his delight, and he let nothing beat him. One of these excursions, the ascent to the Vöringfos, seems to deserve a word of commemoration, in the interest either of physiology, or of philosophic musings after Cicero's manner upon old age. 'I am not sure,' says Lady Brassey in her most agreeable diary of the cruise,[1] 'that the descent did not seem rougher and longer than our journey up had been, although, as a matter of fact, we got over the ground much more quickly. As we crossed the green pastures on the level ground near the village of Sæbö we met several people taking their evening stroll, and also a tourist apparently on his way up to spend the night near the Vöringfos. The wind had gone down since the morning, and we crossed the little lake with fair rapidity, admiring as we went the glorious effects of the setting sun upon the tops of the precipitous mountains, and the wonderful echo which was aroused for our benefit by the boatmen. An extremely jolty drive, in springless country carts, soon brought us to the little inn at Vik, and by half-past eight we were once more on board the *Sunbeam*, exactly ten hours after setting out upon our expedition, which had included a ride or walk, as the case might be, of eighteen miles, independently of the journey by boat and cart—a hardish day's work for any one, but really a wonderful undertaking for a man of seventy-five, who disdained all proffered help, and insisted on walking the whole distance. No one who saw Mr. Gladstone that evening at dinner in the highest spirits, and discussing subjects both

[1] In *The Contemporary Review*, October 1885, p. 491.

grave and gay with the greatest animation, could fail to admire his marvellous pluck and energy, or, knowing what he had shown himself capable of doing in the way of physical exertion, could feel much anxiety on the score of the failure of his strength.'

He was touched by a visit from the son of an old farmer, who brought him as an offering from his father to Mr. Gladstone a curiously carved Norwegian bowl three hundred years old, with two horse-head handles. Strolling about Aalesund, he was astonished to find in the bookshop of the place a Norse translation of Mill's *Logic*. He was closely observant of all religious services whenever he had the chance, and noticed that at Laurvig all the tombstones had prayers for the dead. He read perhaps a little less voraciously than usual, and on one or two days, being unable to read, he 'meditated and reviewed'—always, I think, from the same point of view—the point of view of Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, or his own letters to his father half a century before. Not seldom a vision of the coming elections flitted before the mind's eye, and he made notes for what he calls an *abbozzo* or sketch of his address to Midlothian.

Book IX

(*1885–1886*)

CHAPTER I

LEADERSHIP AND THE GENERAL ELECTION

(*1885*)

Our understanding of history is spoiled by our knowledge of the event.—Helps.

Mr. Gladstone came back from his cruise in the *Sunbeam* at the beginning of September; leaving the yacht at Fort-George and proceeding to Fasque to celebrate his elder brother's golden wedding. From Fasque he wrote to Lord Hartington (Sept. 3):—'I have returned to terra firma extremely well in general health, and with a better throat; in full expectation of having to consider anxious and doubtful matters, and now finding them rather more anxious and doubtful than I had anticipated. As yet I am free to take a share or not in the coming political issues, and I must weigh many things before finally surrendering this freedom.' His first business, he wrote to Sir W. Harcourt (Sept. 12), was to throw his thoughts into order for an address to his constituents, framed only for the dissolution, and 'written with my best care to avoid treading on the toes of either the right or the left wing.' He had communicated, he said, with Granville, Hartington, and Chamberlain; by both of the two latter he had been a good deal buffeted; and having explained the general idea with which he proposed to write, he asked each of the pair whether upon the whole their wish was that he should go on or cut out. 'To this question I have not yet got a clear affirmative answer from either of them.'

'The subject of Ireland,' he told Lord Hartington, 'has perplexed me much even on the North Sea,' and he expressed some regret that in a recent speech his correspondent had felt it necessary at this early period to join issue in so pointed a manner with Mr. Parnell and his party. Parnell's speech was,

no doubt, he said, 'as bad as bad could be, and admitted of only one answer. But the whole question of the position which Ireland will assume after the general election is so new, so difficult, and as yet, I think, so little understood that it seems most important to reserve until the proper time all possible liberty of examining it.'

The address to his electors, of which he had begun to think on board the *Sunbeam*, was given to the public on September 17. It was, as he said, as long as a pamphlet, and a considerable number of politicians doubtless passed judgment upon it without reading it through. The whigs, we are told, found it vague, the radicals cautious, the tories crafty: but everybody admitted that it tended to heal feuds. Mr. Goschen praised it, and Mr. Chamberlain, though raising his own flag, was respectful to his leader's manifesto.[1]

The surface was thus stilled for the moment, yet the waters ran very deep. What were 'the anxious and doubtful matters,' what 'the coming political issues,' of which Mr. Gladstone had written to Lord Hartington? They were, in a word, twofold: to prevent the right wing from breaking with the left; and second, to make ready for an Irish crisis, which as he knew could not be averted. These were the two keys to all his thoughts, words, and deeds during the important autumn of 1885—an Irish crisis, a solid party. He was not the first great parliamentary leader whose course lay between two impossibilities.

All his letters during the interval between his return from the cruise in the *Sunbeam* and the close of the general election disclose with perfect clearness the channels in which events and his judgment upon them were moving. Whigs and radicals alike looked to him, and across him fought their battle. The Duke of Argyll, for example, taking advantage of a lifelong friendship to deal faithfully with him, warned him that the long fight with 'Beaconsfieldism' had thrown him into antagonism with many political conceptions and sympathies that once had a steady hold upon him. Yet they had certainly no less value and truth than they ever had, and perhaps were more needed than ever in face of the present chaos of opinion. To this Mr. Gladstone replied at length:—

To the Duke of Argyll.

Sept. 30, 1885.—I am very sensible of your kind and sympathetic tone, and of your indulgent verdict upon my address. It was written with a view to the election, and as a practical document, aiming at the union of all, it propounds for immediate action what all are supposed to be agreed on. This is necessarily somewhat favourable to the moderate section of the liberal party. You will feel that it would not have been quite fair to the advanced men to add some special reproof to them. And reproof, if I had presumed upon it, would have been two-sided. Now as to your suggestion that I should say something in public to

[1] See *Spectator*, Sept. 26, 1885.

indicate that I am not too sanguine as to the future. If I am unable to go in this direction—and something I may do—it is not from want of sympathy with much that you say. But my first and great cause of anxiety is, believe me, the condition of the tory party. As at present constituted, or at any rate moved, it is destitute of all the effective qualities of a respectable conservatism. . . . For their administrative spirit I point to the Beaconsfield finance. For their foreign policy they have invented Jingoism, and at the same time by their conduct *re* Lord Spencer and the Irish nationalists, they have thrown over—and they formed their government only by means of throwing over—those principles of executive order and caution which have hitherto been common to all governments. . . .

There are other chapters which I have not time to open. I deeply deplore the oblivion into which public economy has fallen; the prevailing disposition to make a luxury of panics, which multitudes seem to enjoy as they would a sensational novel or a highly seasoned cookery; and the leaning of both parties to socialism, which I radically disapprove. I must lastly mention among my causes of dissatisfaction the conduct of the timid or reactionary whigs. They make it day by day more difficult to maintain that most valuable characteristic of our history, which has always exhibited a good proportion of our great houses at the head of the liberal movement. If you have ever noted of late years a too sanguine and high-coloured anticipation of our future, I should like to be reminded of it. I remain, and I hope always to be, your affectionate friend.

The correspondence with Lord Granville sets out more clearly than anything else could do Mr. Gladstone's general view of the situation of the party and his own relation to it, and the operative words in this correspondence, in view of the maelstrom to which they were all drawing nearer, will be accurately noted by any reader who cares to understand one of the most interesting situations in the history of party. To Lord Granville he says (September 9, 1885), 'The problem for me is to make if possible a statement which will hold through the election and not to go into conflict with either the right wing of the party for whom Hartington has spoken, or the left wing for whom, Chamberlain, I suppose, spoke last night. I do not say they are to be treated as on a footing, but I must do no act disparaging to Chamberlain's wing.' And again to Lord Granville a month later (Oct. 5):—

You hold a position of great impartiality in relation to any divergent opinions among members of the late cabinet. No other person occupies ground so thoroughly favourable. I turn to myself for one moment. I remain at present in the leadership of the party, first with a view to the election, and secondly with a view to being, by a bare possibility, of use afterwards in the Irish question, if it should take a favourable turn; but as you know, with the intention of taking no part in any schism of the party should it arise, and of avoiding any and all official responsibility, should the question be merely one of liberal *v.* conservative, and not one of commanding imperial necessity, such as that of Irish government may come to be after the dissolution.

He goes on to say that the ground had now been sufficiently laid for going to the election with a united front, that ground being the common profession of a limited creed or programme in the liberal sense, with an entire freedom for those so inclined, to travel beyond it, but not to impose their own sense upon all other people. No one, he thought, was bound to determine at that moment on what conditions he would join a liberal government. If the party and its leaders were agreed as to immediate measures on local government, land, and registration, were not these enough to find a liberal administration plenty of work, especially with procedure, for several years? If so, did they not supply a ground broad enough to start a government, that would hold over, until the proper time should come, all the questions on which its members might not be agreed, just as the government of Lord Grey held over, from 1830 to 1834, the question whether Irish church property might or might not be applied to secular uses?

As for himself, in the event of such a government being formed (of which I suppose Lord Granville was to be the head), 'My desire would be,' he says, 'to place myself in your hands for all purposes, except that of taking office; to be present or absent from the House, and to be absent for a time or for good, as you might on consultation and reflection think best.' In other words Mr. Gladstone would take office to try to settle the Irish question, but for nothing else. Lord Granville held to the view that this was fatal to the chances of a liberal government. No liberal cabinet could be constructed unless Mr. Gladstone were at its head. The indispensable chief, however, remained obdurate.

An advance was made at this moment in the development of a peculiar situation by important conversations with Mr. Chamberlain. Two days later the redoubtable leader of the left wing came to Hawarden for a couple of days, and Mr. Gladstone wrote an extremely interesting account of what passed to Lord Granville:[1]—

To Lord Granville.

Hawarden, Oct. 8, 1885.—Chamberlain came here yesterday and I have had a great deal of conversation with him. He is a good man to talk to, not only from his force and clearness, but because he speaks with reflection, does not misapprehend or (I think) suspect, or make unnecessary difficulties, or endeavour to maintain pedantically the uniformity and consistency of his argument throughout.

As to the three points of which he was understood to say that they

[1] Mr. Chamberlain has been good enough to read these two letters, and he assents to their substantial accuracy, with a demurrer on two or three points, justly observing that anybody reporting a very long and varied conversation is almost certain, however scrupulous in intention, to insert in places what were thoughts much in his own mind, rather than words actually spoken. In inserting these two letters, it may tend to prevent controversy if we print such corrective hints as are desired.

were indispensable to the starting of a liberal government, I gather that they stand as follows:

1. As to the authority of local authorities for compulsory expropriation.[1] To this he adheres; though I have said I could not see the justification for withholding countenance from the formation of a government with considerable and intelligible plans in view, because it would not at the first moment bind all its members to this doctrine. He intimates, however, that the form would be simple, the application of the principle mild; that he does not expect wide results from it, and that Hartington, he conceives, is not disposed wholly to object to everything of the kind.

2. As regards readjustment of taxation, he is contented with the terms of my address, and indisposed to make any new terms.

3. As regards free education, he does not ask that its principle be adopted as part of the creed of a new cabinet. He said it would be necessary to reserve his right individually to vote for it. I urged that he and the new school of advanced liberals were not sufficiently alive to the necessity of refraining when in government from declaring by *vote* all their individual opinions; that a vote founded upon time, and the engagements of the House at the moment with other indispensable business, would imply no disparagement to the principle, which might even be expressly saved ('without prejudice') by an amending resolution; that he could hardly carry this point to the rank of a *sine quâ non*. He said,—That the sense of the country might bind the liberal majority (presuming it to exist) to declare its opinion, even though unable to give effect to it at the moment; that he looked to a single declaration, not to the sustained support of a measure; and he seemed to allow that if the liberal sense were so far divided as not to show a unanimous front, in that case it might be a question whether some plan other than, and short of, a direct vote might be pursued.[2]

The question of the House of Lords and disestablishment he regards as still lying in the remoter distance.

All these subjects I separated entirely from the question of Ireland, on which I may add that he and I are pretty well agreed; unless upon a secondary point, namely, whether Parnell would be satisfied to acquiesce in a County Government bill, good so far as it went, maintaining on other matters his present general attitude.[3] We agreed, I think, that a prolongation of the present relations of the Irish party would be a national disgrace, and the civilised world would scoff at the political genius of countries which could not contrive so far to understand one another as to bring their differences to an accommodation.

All through Chamberlain spoke of reducing to an absolute minimum his idea of necessary conditions, and this conversation so far left untouched the question of men, he apparently assuming (wrongly) that I was ready for another three or four years' engagement.

Hawarden, Oct. 8, 1885.—In another 'private,' but less private letter, I have touched on measures, and I have now to say what passed in relation to men.

[1] In connection with a local government bill for small holdings and allotments, subsequently passed.

[2] He suggested, for instance, the appointment of a committee.

[3] Mr. Chamberlain puts it that he proposed to exclude home rule as impossible, and to offer a Local Government bill which he thought that Parnell might accept. Mr. Gladstone's statement that he and his visitor were 'pretty well agreed' on Ireland, cannot mean therefore that the visitor was in favour of home rule.

He said the outline he had given depended on the supposition of my being at the head of the government. He did not say he could adhere to it on no other terms, but appeared to stipulate for a new point of departure.

I told him the question of my time of life had become such, that in any case prudence bound him, and all who have a future, to think of what is to follow me. That if a big Irish question should arise, and arise in such a form as to promise a possibility of settlement, that would be a crisis with a beginning and an end, and perhaps one in which from age and circumstances I might be able to supply aid and service such as could not be exactly had without me.[1] Apart from an imperious demand of this kind the question would be that of dealing with land laws, with local government, and other matters, on which I could render *no* special service, and which would require me to enter into a new contest for several years, a demand that ought not to be made, and one to which I could not accede. I did not think the adjustment of personal relations, or the ordinary exigencies of party, constituted a call upon me to continue my long life in a course of constant pressure and constant contention with half my fellow-countrymen, until nothing remained but to step into the grave.

He agreed that the House of Lords was not an available resort. He thought I might continue at the head of the government, and leave the work of legislation to others.[2] I told him that all my life long I had had an essential and considerable share in the legislative work of government, and to abandon it would be an essential change, which the situation would not bear.

He spoke of the constant conflicts of opinion with Hartington in the late cabinet, but I reverted to the time when Hartington used to summon and lead meetings of the leading commoners, in which he was really the least antagonistic of men.

He said Hartington might lead a whig government aided by the tories, or might lead a radical government. . . . I recommended his considering carefully the personal composition of the group of leading men, apart from a single personality on which reliance could hardly be placed, except in the single contingency to which I have referred as one of a character probably brief.

He said it might be right for him to look as a friend on the formation of a liberal government, having (as I understood) moderate but intelligible plans, without forming part of it. I think this was the substance of what passed.

Interesting as was this interview, it did not materially alter Mr. Gladstone's disposition. After it had taken place he wrote to Lord Granville (Nov. 10) :—

To Lord Granville.

I quite understand how natural it is that at the present juncture pressure, and even the whole pressure, should from both quarters be brought to bear upon me. Well, if a special call of imperial interest, such as I have described, should arise, I am ready for the service it may entail, so far as my will is concerned. But a very different question is raised. Let us see how matters stand.

A course of action for the liberals, moderate but substantial, has been

1 This is not remembered.

2 'Some misunderstanding here.'

sketched. The party in general have accepted it. After the late conversations, there is no reason to anticipate a breach upon any of the conditions laid down anywhere for immediate adoption, between the less advanced and the more advanced among the leaders. It must occupy several years, and it may occupy the whole parliament. According to your view they will, unless on a single condition [*i.e.* Mr. Gladstone's leadership], refuse to combine in a cabinet, and to act, with a majority at their back; and will make over the business voluntarily to the tories in a minority, at the commencement of a parliament. Why? They agree on the subjects before them. Other subjects, unknown as yet, may arise to split them. But this is what may happen to any government, and *it* can form no reason.

But what *is* the condition demanded? It is that a man of seventy-five,[1] after fifty-three years' service, with *no* particular qualifications for the questions in view should enter into a fresh contract of service in the House of Commons, reaching according to all likelihood over three, four, or five years, and without the smallest reasonable prospect of a break. And this is not to solve a political difficulty, but to soothe and conjure down personal misgivings and apprehensions. I have not said jealousies, because I do *not* believe them to be the operative cause; perhaps they do not exist at all.

I firmly say this is not a reasonable condition, or a tenable demand, in the circumstances supposed. Indeed no one has endeavoured to show that it is. Further, abated action in the House of Commons is out of the question. We cannot have, in these times, a figure-head prime minister. I have gone a very long way in what I have said, and I really cannot go further. Lord Aberdeen, taking office at barely seventy in the House of Lords, apologised in his opening speech for doing this at a time when his mind ought rather to be given to 'other thoughts.' Lord Palmerston in 1859 did not speak thus. But he was bound to no plan of any kind; and he was seventy-four, *i.e.* in his seventy-fifth year.

II

It is high time to turn to the other deciding issue in the case. Though thus stubborn against resuming the burden of leadership merely to compose discords between Chatsworth and Birmingham, Mr. Gladstone was ready to be of use in the Irish question, 'if it should take a favourable turn.' As if the Irish question ever took a favourable turn. We have seen in the opening of the present chapter, how he spoke to Lord Hartington of a certain speech of Mr. Parnell's in September, 'as bad as bad could be.' The secret of that speech was a certain fact that must be counted a central hinge of these far-reaching transactions. In July, a singular incident had occurred, nothing less strange than an interview between the new lord-lieutenant and the leader of the Irish party. To realise its full significance, we have to recall the profound odium that at this time enveloped Mr. Parnell's name in the minds of nearly all Englishmen. For several years and at that moment he figured in the public imagination for all that is sinister, treasonable,

[1] That is, in his seventy-sixth year.

dark, mysterious, and unholy. He had stood his trial for a criminal conspiracy, and was supposed only to have been acquitted by the corrupt connivance of a Dublin jury. He had been flung into prison and kept there for many months without trial, as a person reasonably suspected of lawless practices. High treason was the least dishonourable of the offences imputed to him and commonly credited about him. He had been elaborately accused before the House of Commons by one of the most important men in it, of direct personal responsibility for outrages and murders, and he left the accusation with scant reply. He was constantly denounced as the apostle of rapine and rebellion. That the viceroy of the Queen should without duress enter into friendly communication with such a man, would have seemed to most people at that day incredible and abhorrent. Yet the incredible thing happened, and it was in its purpose one of the most sensible things that any viceroy ever did.[1]

The interview took place in a London drawing-room. Lord Carnarvon opened the conversation by informing Mr. Parnell, first, that he was acting of himself and by himself, on his own exclusive responsibility; second, that he sought information only, and that he had not come for the purpose of arriving at any agreement or understanding however shadowy; third, that he was, there as the Queen's servant, and would neither hear nor say one word that was inconsistent with the union of the two countries. Exactly what Mr. Parnell said, and what was said in reply, the public were never authentically told. Mr. Parnell afterwards spoke[2] as if Lord Carnarvon had given him to understand that it was the intention of the government to offer Ireland a statutory legislature, with full control over taxation, and that a scheme of land purchase was to be coupled with it. On this, the viceroy denied that he had communicated any such intention. Mr. Parnell's story was this :—

Lord Carnarvon proceeded to say that he had sought the interview for the purpose of ascertaining my views regarding—should he call it?—a constitution for Ireland. But I soon found out that he had brought me

[1] This episode was first mentioned in the House of Commons, June 7, 1886. Lord Carnarvon explained in the Lords, June 10. Mr. Parnell replied in a letter to the *Times*, June 12. He revived the subject in the House of Commons, Feb. 13, 1888, and Lord Carnarvon explained a second time in the Lords on May 3. On Lord Carnarvon's first explanation, the Duke of Argyll, while placing the utmost reliance on his personal honour and accuracy, 'felt bound to observe that the statement did not appear to be complete, for he had omitted to explain what the nature of the communication [with Mr. Parnell] absolutely was.' Neither then nor two years later was the omission made good. Curiously enough on the first occasion Lord Carnarvon did not even mention that Lord Salisbury in any way shared his responsibility for the interview, and in fact his language pointed the other way. What remains is his asseveration, supported by Lord Salisbury, that he had made no formal bargain with Mr. Parnell, and gave him no sort of promise, assurance, or pledge. This is not only entirely credible, it is certain; for the only body that could carry out such a promise had not been consulted. 'I may at least say this of what went on outside the cabinet—that I had no communication on the subject, *no authorisation*, and that I never communicated to them even that which I had done.'—*Hansard*, 306, p. 1253.

[2] E.g. *Hansard*, 306, pp. 1181, 1199.

there in order that he might communicate his own views upon the matter, as well as ascertain mine. . . . In reply to an inquiry as to a proposal which had been made to build up a central legislative body upon the foundation of county boards, I told him I thought this would be working in the wrong direction, and would not be accepted by Ireland; that the central legislative body should be a parliament in name and in fact. . . . Lord Carnarvon assured me that this was his own view also, and he strongly appreciated the importance of giving due weight to the sentiment of the Irish in this matter. . . . He had certain suggestions to this end, taking the colonial model as a basis, which struck me as being the result of much thought and knowledge of the subject. . . . At the conclusion of the conversation, which lasted for more than an hour, and to which Lord Carnarvon was very much the larger contributor, I left him, believing that I was in complete accord with him regarding the main outlines of a settlement conferring a legislature upon Ireland.[1]

It is certainly not for me to contend that Mr. Parnell was always an infallible reporter, but if closely scrutinised the discrepancy in the two stories as then told was less material than is commonly supposed. To the passage just quoted, Lord Carnarvon never at any time in public offered any real contradiction. What he contradicted was something different. He denied that he had ever stated to Mr. Parnell that it was the intention of the government, if they were successful at the polls, to establish the Irish legislature, with limited powers and not independent of imperial control, which he himself favoured. He did not deny, any more than he admitted, that he had told Mr. Parnell that on opinion and policy they were very much at one. How could he deny it, after his speech when he first took office? Though the cabinet was not cognizant of the nature of these proceedings, the prime minister was. To take so remarkable a step without the knowledge and assent of the head of the government, would have been against the whole practice and principles of our ministerial system. Lord Carnarvon informed Lord Salisbury of his intention of meeting Mr. Parnell, and within twenty-four hours after the meeting, both in writing and orally, he gave Lord Salisbury as careful and accurate a statement as possible of what had passed. We can well imagine the close attention with which the prime minister followed so profoundly interesting a report, and at the end of it he told the viceroy that 'he had conducted the conversation with Mr. Parnell with perfect discretion.' The knowledge that the minister responsible for the government of Ireland was looking in the direction of home rule, and exchanging home rule views with the great home rule leader, did not shake Lord Salisbury's confidence in his fitness to be viceroy.

This is no mere case of barren wrangle and verbal recrimination. The transaction had consequences, and the Carnarvon episode was a pivot. The effect upon the mind of Mr. Parnell was easy to foresee. Was I not justified, he asked long after-

[1] Letter to the *Times*, June 12, 1886.

wards, in supposing that Lord Carnarvon, holding the views that he now indicated, would not have been made viceroy unless there was a considerable feeling in the cabinet that his views were right?[1] Could he imagine that the viceroy would be allowed to talk home rule to him—however shadowy and vague the words—unless the prime minister considered such a solution to be at any rate well worth discussing? Why should he not believe that the alliance formed in June to turn Mr. Gladstone out of office and eject Lord Spencer from Ireland, had really blossomed from being a mere lobby manœuvre and election expedient, into a serious policy adopted by serious statesmen? Was it not certain that in such remarkable circumstances Mr. Parnell would throughout the election confidently state the national demand at its very highest?

In 1882 and onwards up to the Reform Act of 1885, Mr. Parnell had been ready to advocate the creation of a central council at Dublin for administrative purposes merely. This he thought would be a suitable achievement for a party that only numbered thirty-five members. But the assured increase of his strength at the coming election made all the difference. When semi-official soundings were taken from more than one liberal quarter after the fall of the Gladstone government, it was found that Mr. Parnell no longer countenanced provisional reforms. After the interview with Lord Carnarvon, the mercury rose rapidly to the top of the tube. Larger powers of administration were not enough. The claim for legislative power must now be brought boldly to the front. In unmistakable terms, the Irish leader stated the Irish demand, and posed both problem and solution. He now declared his conviction that the great and sole work of himself and his friends in the new parliament would be the restoration of a national parliament of their own, to do the things which they had been vainly asking the imperial parliament to do for them.[2]

III

When politicians ruminate upon the disastrous schism that followed Mr. Gladstone's attempt to deal with the Irish question in 1886, they ought closely to study the general election of 1885. In that election, though leading men foresaw the approach of a marked Irish crisis, and awaited the outcome of events with an overshadowing sense of pregnant issues, there was nothing like general concentration on the Irish prospect. The strife of programmes and the rivalries of leaders were what engrossed the popular attention. The main body of the British electors were thinking mainly of promised agrarian boons, fair trade, the church in danger, or some other of their own domestic affairs.

Few forms of literature or history are so dull as the narrative of political debates. With a few exceptions, a political

[1] *Hansard*, 332, p. 836. [2] August 24, 1885.

speech like the manna in the wilderness loses its savour on the second day. Three or four marked utterances of this critical autumn, following all that has been set forth already, will enable the reader to understand the division of counsel that prevailed immediately before the great change of policy in 1886, and the various strategic evolutions, masked movements, and play of mine, sap, and countermine, that led to it. As has just been described, and with good reason, for he believed that he had the Irish viceroy on his side, Mr. Parnell stood inflexible. In his speech of August 24 already mentioned, he had thrown down his gauntlet.

Much the most important answer to the challenge, if we regard the effect upon subsequent events, was that of Lord Salisbury two months later. To this I shall have to return. The two liberal statesmen, Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, who were most active in this campaign, and whose activity was well spiced and salted by a lively political antagonism, agreed in a tolerably stiff negative to the Irish demand. The whig leader with a slow mind, and the radical leader with a quick mind, on this single issue of the campaign spoke with one voice. The whig leader[1] thought Mr. Parnell had made a mistake and ensured his own defeat: he overestimated his power in Ireland and his power in parliament; the Irish would not for the sake of this impossible and impracticable undertaking, forego without duress all the other objects which parliament was ready to grant them; and it remained to be seen whether he could enforce his iron discipline upon his eighty or ninety adherents, even if Ireland gave him so many.

The radical leader was hardly less emphatic, and his utterance was the more interesting of the two, because until this time Mr. Chamberlain had been generally taken throughout his parliamentary career as leaning strongly in the nationalist direction. He had taken a bold and energetic part in the proceedings that ended in the release of Mr. Parnell from Kilmainham. He had with much difficulty been persuaded to acquiesce in the renewal of any part of the Coercion Act, and had absented himself from the banquet in honour of Lord Spencer. Together with his most intimate ally in the late government, he had projected a political tour in Ireland with Mr. Parnell's approval and under his auspices. Above all, he had actually opened his electoral campaign with that famous declaration which was so long remembered:—'The pacification of Ireland at this moment depends, I believe, on the concession to Ireland of the right to govern itself in the matter of its purely domestic business. Is it not discreditable to us that even now it is only by unconstitutional means that we are able to secure peace and order in one portion of her Majesty's dominions? It is a system as completely centralised and bureaucratic as that with which

[1] Lord Hartington at Waterfoot, Aug. 29.

Russia governs Poland, or as that which prevailed in Venice under the Austrian rule. An Irishman at this moment cannot move a step—he cannot lift a finger in any parochial, municipal, or educational work, without being confronted with, interfered with, controlled by an English official, appointed by a foreign government, and without a shade or shadow of representative authority. I say the time has come to reform altogether the absurd and irritating anachronism which is known as Dublin Castle. That is the work to which the new parliament will be called.'[1] Masters of incisive speech must pay the price of their gifts, and the sentence about Poland and Venice was long a favourite in many a debate. But when the Irish leader now made his proposal for removing the Russian yoke and the Austrian yoke from Ireland, the English leader drew back. 'If these,' he said, 'are the terms on which Mr. Parnell's support is to be obtained, I will not enter into the compact.' This was Mr. Chamberlain's response.[2]

IV

The language used by Mr. Gladstone during this eventful time was that of a statesman conscious of the magnitude of the issue, impressed by the obscurity of the path along which parties and leaders were travelling, and keenly alive to the perils of a premature or unwary step. Nothing was easier for the moment either for quick minds or slow minds, than to face the Irish demand beforehand with a bare, blank, wooden *non possumus*. Mr. Gladstone had pondered the matter more deeply. His gift of political imagination, his wider experience, and his personal share in some chapters of the modern history of Europe and its changes, planted him on a height whence he commanded a view of possibilities and necessities, of hopes and of risks, that were unseen by politicians of the beaten track. Like a pilot amid wandering icebergs, or in waters where familiar buoys had been taken up and immemorial beacons put out, he scanned the scene with keen eyes and a glass sweeping the horizon in every direction. No wonder that his words seemed vague, and vague they undoubtedly were. Suppose that Cavour had been obliged to issue an election address on the eve of the interview at Plombières, or Bismarck while he was on his visit to Biarritz. Their language would hardly have been pellucid. This was no moment for ultimatums. There were too many unascertained elements. Yet some of those, for instance, who most ardently admired President Lincoln for the caution with which he advanced step by step to the abolition proclamation, have most freely censured the English statesman because he did not in the autumn of 1885 come out with either a downright Yes or a point-blank No. The point-blank is not for all occasions, and only a simpleton can think otherwise.

[1] June 17, 1885. [2] Warrington, September 8.

In September Mr. Childers—a most capable administrator, a zealous colleague, wise in what the world regards as the secondary sort of wisdom, and the last man to whom one would have looked for a plunge—wrote to Mr. Gladstone to seek his approval of a projected announcement to his constituents at Pontefract, which amounted to a tolerably full-fledged scheme of home rule.[1] In view of the charitable allegation that Mr. Gladstone picked up home rule after the elections had placed it in the power of the Irish either to put him into office or to keep him out of office, his reply to Mr. Childers deserves attention :—

To Mr. Childers.

Sept. 28, 1885.—I have a decided sympathy with the general scope and spirit of your proposed declaration about Ireland. If I offer any observations, they are meant to be simply in furtherance of your purpose.

1. I would disclaim giving any exhaustive list of Imperial subjects, and would not 'put my foot down' as to revenue, but would keep plenty of elbow-room to keep all customs and excise, which would probably be found necessary.

2. A general disclaimer of particulars as to the form of any local legislature might suffice, without giving the Irish expressly to know it might be decided mainly by their wish.

3. I think there is no doubt Ulster would be able to take care of itself in respect to education, but a question arises and forms, I think, the most difficult part of the whole subject, whether some defensive provisions for the owners of land and property should not be considered.

4. It is evident you have given the subject much thought, and my sympathy goes largely to your details as well as your principle. But considering the danger of placing confidence in the leaders of the national party at the present moment, and the decided disposition they have shown to raise their terms on any favourable indication, I would beg you to consider further whether you should *bind* yourself at present to any details, or go beyond general indications. If you say in terms (and this I do not dissuade) that you are ready to consider the question whether they can have a legislature for all questions not Imperial, this will be a great step in advance; and anything you may say beyond it, I should like to see veiled in language not such as to commit you.

The reader who is now acquainted with Mr. Gladstone's strong support of the Chamberlain plan in 1885, and with the bias already disclosed, knows in what direction the main current of his thought must have been setting. The position taken in 1885 was in entire harmony with all these premonitory notes. Subject, said Mr. Gladstone, to the supremacy of the crown, the unity of the empire, and all the authority of parliament necessary for the conservation of that unity, every grant to portions of the country of enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs, was not a source of danger, but a means of averting it. As to the legislative union, 'I believe

[1] *Life of Childers*, ii. p. 280.

history and posterity will consign to disgrace the name and memory of every man, be he who he may, and on whichever side of the Channel he may dwell, that having the power to aid in an equitable settlement between Ireland and Great Britain, shall use that power not to aid, but to prevent or to retard it.'[1] These and all the other large and profuse sentences of the Midlothian address were undoubtedly open to more than one construction, and they either admitted or excluded home rule, as might happen. The fact that, though it was running so freely in his own mind, he did not put Irish autonomy into the forefront of his address, has been made a common article of charge against him. As if the view of Irish autonomy now running in his mind were not dependent on a string of hypotheses. And who can imagine a party leader's election address that should have run thus?—'If Mr. Parnell returns with a great majority of members, and if the minority is not weighty enough, and if the demand is constitutionally framed, and if the Parnellites are unanimous, then we will try home rule. And this possibility of a hypothetical experiment is to be the liberal cry with which to go into battle against Lord Salisbury, who, so far as I can see, is nursing the idea of the same experiment.'

Some weeks later, in speaking to his electors in Midlothian, Mr. Gladstone instead of minimising magnified the Irish case, pushed it into the very forefront, not in one speech, but in nearly all; warned his hearers of the gravity of the questions soon to be raised by it, and assured them that it would probably throw into the shade the other measures that he had described as ripe for action. He elaborated a declaration, of which much was heard for many months and years afterwards. What Ireland, he said, may deliberately and constitutionally demand, unless it infringes the principles connected with the honourable maintenance of the unity of the empire, will be a demand that we are bound at any rate to treat with careful attention. To stint Ireland in power which might be necessary or desirable for the management of matters purely Irish, would be a great error; and if she was so stinted, the end that any such measure might contemplate could not be attained. Then came the memorable appeal:—'Apart from the term of whig and tory, there is one thing I will say and will endeavour to impress upon you, and it is this. It will be a vital danger to the country and to the empire, if at a time when a demand from Ireland for larger powers of self-government is to be dealt with, there is not in parliament a party totally independent of the Irish vote.'[2] Loud and long-sustained have been the reverberations of this clanging sentence. It was no mere passing dictum. Mr. Gladstone himself insisted upon the same position again and again, that 'for a government in a minority to deal with

[1] Sept. 18, 1885. [2] Nov. 9, 1885.

the Irish question would not be safe.' This view, propounded in his first speech, was expanded in his second. There he deliberately set out that the urgent expediency of a liberal majority independent of Ireland did not foreshadow the advent of a liberal government to power. He referred to the settlement of household suffrage in 1867. How was the tory government enabled to effect that settlement? Because there was in the House a liberal majority which did not care to eject the existing ministry.[1] He had already reminded his electors that tory governments were sometimes able to carry important measures, when once they had made up their minds to it, with greater facility than liberal governments could. For instance, if Peel had not been the person to propose the repeal of the corn laws, Lord John would not have had fair consideration from the tories; and no liberal government could have carried the Maynooth Act.[2]

The plain English of the abundant references to Ireland in the Midlothian speeches of this election is, that Mr. Gladstone foresaw beyond all shadow of doubt that the Irish question in its largest extent would at once demand the instant attention of the new parliament; that the best hope of settling it would be that the liberals should have a majority of their own; that the second best hope lay in its settlement by the tory government with the aid of the liberals; but that, in any case, the worst of all conditions under which a settlement could be attempted—an attempt that could not be avoided—would be a situation in which Mr. Parnell should hold the balance between parliamentary parties.

The precise state of Mr. Gladstone's mind at this moment is best shown in a very remarkable letter written by him to Lord Rosebery, under whose roof at Dalmeny he was staying at the time:—

To Lord Rosebery.

Dalmeny Park, 13th Nov. 1885.—You have called my attention to the recent speech of Mr. Parnell, in which he expresses the desire that I should frame a plan for giving to Ireland, without prejudice to imperial unity and interests, the management of her own affairs. The subject is so important that, though we are together, I will put on paper my view of this proposal. For the moment I assume that such a plan can be framed. Indeed, if I had considered this to be hopeless, I should have been guilty of great rashness in speaking of it as a contingency that should be kept in view at the present election. I will first give reasons, which I deem to be of great weight, against my producing a scheme, reserving to the close one reason, which would be conclusive in the absence of every other reason.

1. It is not the province of the person leading the party in opposition, to frame and produce before the public detailed schemes of such a class.

2. There are reasons of great weight, which make it desirable that the

[1] Midlothian Speeches, p. 49. [2] *Ibid.* p. 89.

party now in power should, if prepared to adopt the principle, and if supported by an adequate proportion of the coming House of Commons, undertake the construction and proposal of the measure.

3. The unfriendly relations between the party of nationalists and the late government in the expiring parliament, have of necessity left me and those with whom I act in great ignorance of the interior mind of the party, which has in parliament systematically confined itself to very general declarations.

4. That the principle and basis of an admissible measure have been clearly declared by myself, if not by others, before the country; more clearly, I think, than was done in the case of the Irish disestablishment; and that the particulars of such plans in all cases have been, and probably must be, left to the discretion of the legislature acting under the usual checks.

But my final and paramount reason is, that the production at this time of a plan by me would not only be injurious, but would destroy all reasonable hope of its adoption. Such a plan, proposed by the heads of the liberal party, is so certain to have the opposition of the tories *en bloc*, that every computation must be founded on this anticipation. This opposition, and the appeals with which it will be accompanied, will render the carrying of the measure difficult even by a united liberal party; hopeless or most difficult, should there be serious defection.

Mr. Parnell is apprehensive of the opposition of the House of Lords. That idea weighs little with me. I have to think of something nearer, and more formidable. The idea of constituting a legislature for Ireland, whenever seriously and responsibly proposed, will cause a mighty heave in the body politic. It will be as difficult to carry the liberal party and the two British nations in favour of a legislature for Ireland, as it was easy to carry them in the case of Irish disestablishment. I think that it may possibly be done; but only by the full use of a great leverage. That leverage can only be found in their equitable and mature consideration of what is due to the fixed desire of a nation, clearly and constitutionally expressed. Their prepossessions will not be altogether favourable; and they cannot in this matter be bullied.

I have therefore endeavoured to lay the ground by stating largely the possibility and the gravity, even the solemnity, of that demand. I am convinced that this is the only path which can lead to success. With such a weapon, one might go hopefully into action. But I well know, from a thousand indications past and present, that a new project of mine launched into the air, would have no *momentum* which could carry it to its aim. So, in my mind, stands the case. . . .

Three days before this letter, Mr. Gladstone had replied to one from Lord Hartington:—

To Lord Hartington.

Dalmeny, Nov. 10, 1885.—I made a beginning yesterday in one of my conversation speeches, so to call them, on the way, by laying it down that I was particularly bound to prevent, if I could, the domination of sectional opinion over the body and action of the party.

I wish to say something about the modern radicalism. But I must include this, that if it is rampant and ambitious, the two most prominent causes of its forwardness have been: 1. Tory democracy. 2. The gradual

disintegration of the liberal aristocracy. On both these subjects my opinions are strong. I think the conduct of the Duke of Bedford and others has been as unjustifiable as it was foolish, especially after what we did to save the House of Lords from itself in the business of the franchise.

Nor can I deny that the question of the House of Lords, of the church, or both, will probably split the liberal party. But let it split decently, honourably, and for cause. That it should split now would, so far as I see, be ludicrous.

So far I have been writing in great sympathy with you, but now I touch a point where our lines have not been the same. You have, I think, courted the hostility of Parnell. Salisbury has carefully avoided doing this, and last night he simply confined himself to two conditions, which you and I both think vital; namely, the unity of the empire and an honourable regard to the position of the 'minority,' *i.e.* the landlords. You will see in the newspapers what Parnell, *making* for himself an opportunity, is reported to have said about the elections in Ulster now at hand. You have opened a vista which appears to terminate in a possible concession to Ireland of full power to manage her own local affairs. But I own my leaning to the opinion that, if that consummation is in any way to be contemplated, action at a stroke will be more honourable, less unsafe, less uneasy, than the jolting process of a series of partial measures. This is my opinion, but I have no intention, as at present advised, of signifying it. I have all along in public declarations avoided offering anything to the nationalists, beyond describing the limiting rule which must govern the question. It is for them to ask, and for us, as I think, to leave the space so defined as open and unencumbered as possible. I am much struck by the increased breadth of Salisbury's declaration last night; he dropped the 'I do not see how.'

We shall see how these great and difficult matters develop themselves. Meantime be assured that, with a good deal of misgiving as to the future, I shall do what little I can towards enabling all liberals at present to hold together with credit and good conscience.

V

Mr. Gladstone's cardinal deliverance in November had been preceded by an important event. On October 7, 1885, Lord Salisbury made that speech at Newport, which is one of the tallest and most striking landmarks in the shifting sands of this controversy. It must be taken in relation to Lord Carnarvon's declaration of policy on taking office, and to his exchange of views with Mr. Parnell at the end of July. Their first principle, said Lord Salisbury, was to extend to Ireland, so far as they could, all the institutions of this country. But one must remember that in Ireland the population is on several subjects deeply divided, and a government is bound 'on all matters of essential justice' to protect a minority against a majority. Then came remarkable sentences: 'Local authorities are more exposed to the temptation of enabling the majority to be unjust to the minority when they obtain jurisdiction over a small area, than is the case when the authority derives its sanction and extends its jurisdiction over a wider area. In a

large central authority, the wisdom of several parts of the country will correct the folly and mistakes of one. In a local authority, that correction is to a much greater extent wanting, and it would be impossible to leave that out of sight, in any extension of any such local authority in Ireland.' This principle was often used in the later controversy as a recognition by Lord Salisbury, that the creation of a great central body would be a safer policy than the mere extension of self-government in Irish counties. In another part of the speech, it is true, the finger-post or weather-vane pointed in the opposite direction. 'With respect to the larger organic questions connected with Ireland,' said Lord Salisbury, 'I cannot say much, though I can speak emphatically. I have nothing to say but that the traditions of the party to which we belong, are on this point clear and distinct, and you may rely upon it our party will not depart from them.' Yet this emphatic refusal to depart from the traditions of the tory party did not prevent Lord Salisbury from retaining at that moment in his cabinet an Irish viceroy, with whom he was in close personal relations, and whose active Irish policy he must have known to be as wide a breach in tory tradition as the mind of man can imagine. So hard is it in distracted times, the reader may reflect, even for men of honourable and lofty motive to be perfectly ingenuous.

The speaker next referred to the marked way in which Mr. Parnell, a day or two before, had mentioned the position of Austro-Hungary. 'I gathered that some notion of imperial federation was floating in his mind. With respect to Ireland, I am bound to say that I have never seen any plan or any suggestion which gives me at present the slightest ground for anticipating that it is in that direction that we shall find any substantial solution of the difficulties of the problem.' In an electric state of the political atmosphere, a statesman who said that at present he did not think federal home rule possible, was taken to imply that he might think it possible by-and-by. No door was closed.

It was, however, Lord Salisbury's language upon social order that gave most scandal to simple consciences in his own ranks. You ask us, he said, why we did not renew the Crimes Act. There are two answers: we could not, and it would have done no good if we could. To follow the extension of the franchise by coercion, would have been a gross inconsistency. To show confidence by one act, and the absence of confidence by a simultaneous act, would be to stultify parliament. Your inconsistency would have provoked such intense exasperation, that it would have led to ten times more evil, ten times more resistance to the law, than your Crimes Act could possibly have availed to check. Then the audience was favoured with a philosophic view of boycotting. This, said the minister, is an offence which legislation has very great difficulty in reaching.

The provisions of the Crimes Act against it had a very small effect. It grew up under that Act. And, after all, look at boycotting. An unpopular man or his family go to mass. The congregation with one accord get up and walk out. Are you going to indict people for leaving church? The plain fact is that boycotting 'is more like the excommunication or interdict of the middle ages, than anything that we know now.' 'The truth about boycotting is that it depends on the passing humour of the population.'

It is important to remember that in the month immediately preceding this polished apologetic, there were delivered some of the most violent boycotting speeches ever made in Ireland.[1] These speeches must have been known to the Irish government, and their occurrence and the purport of them must presumably have been known therefore to the prime minister. Here was indeed a removal of the ancient buoys and beacons that had hitherto guided English navigation in Irish waters. There was even less of a solid ultimatum at Newport, than in those utterances in Midlothian which were at that time and long afterwards found so culpably vague, blind, and elusive. Some of the more astute of the minister's own colleagues were delighted with his speech, as keeping the Irishmen steady to the tory party. They began to hope that they might even come within five-and-twenty of the liberals when the polling began.

The question on which side the Irish vote in Great Britain should be thrown seems not to have been decided until after Mr. Gladstone's speech. It was then speedily settled. On Nov. 21 a manifesto was issued, handing over the Irish vote in Great Britain solid to the orator of the Newport speech. The tactics were obvious. It was Mr. Parnell's interest to bring the two contending British parties as near as might be to a level, and this he could only hope to do by throwing his strength upon the weaker side. It was from the weaker side, if they could be retained in office, that he would get the best terms.[2] The document was composed with vigour and astuteness. But the phrases of the manifesto were the least important part of it. It was enough that the hard word was passed. Some estimated the loss to the liberal party in this island at twenty seats, others at forty. Whether twenty or forty, these lost seats made a fatal difference in the division on the Irish bill a few months later, and when that day had come and gone, Mr. Parnell sometimes ruefully asked himself whether the tactics of the electoral manifesto were not on the whole a mistake. But this was not all and was not the worst of it. The Irish manifesto became a fiery element in a sharp electioneering war, and threw the liberals in all constituencies

[1] Some of them are set out in Special Commission *Report*, pp. 99, 100.

[2] See Mr. Gladstone upon these tactics in his fifth Midlothian speech, Nov. 24, 1885. Also in the seventh, Nov. 28, pp. 159-60.

where there was an Irish vote into a direct and angry antagonism to the Irish cause and its leaders; passions were roused, and things were said about Irishmen that could not at once be forgotten; and the great task of conversion in 1886, difficult in any case, was made a thousand times more difficult still by the arguments and antipathies of the electoral battle of 1885. Meanwhile it was for the moment, and for the purposes of the moment, a striking success.

CHAPTER II

THE POLLS IN 1885

(*1885*)

I would say that civil liberty can have no security without political power.
C. J. Fox.

THE election ran a chequered course (Nov. 23–Dec. 19). It was the first trial of the whole body of male householders, and it was the first trial of the system of single-member districts. This is not the place for a discussion of the change of electoral area. As a scheme for securing representation of minorities it proved of little efficacy, and many believe that the substitution of a smaller constituency for a larger one has tended to slacken political interest, and to narrow political judgment. Meanwhile some of those who were most deeply concerned in establishing the new plan, were confident that an overwhelming liberal triumph would be the result. Many of their opponents took the same view, and were in despair. A liberal met a tory minister on the steps of a club in Pall Mall, as they were both going to the country for their elections. 'I suppose,' said the tory, 'we are out for twenty years to come.' *O pectora cæca!* He has been in office for nearly fifteen of the eighteen years since. In September one of the most authoritative liberal experts did not see how the tories were to have more than 210 out of the 670 seats, including the tory contingent from Ireland. Two months later the expert admitted that the tory chances were improving, mainly owing to what in electioneering slang was called the church scare. Fair trade, too, had made many converts in Lancashire. On the very eve of the polls the estimate at liberal headquarters was a majority of forty over tories and Irishmen combined.

II

As I should have told the reader on an earlier page, Mr. Gladstone had proceeded to his own constituency on November 9. The previous month had found, as usual, endless other interests to occupy him, quite apart from politics. These are

the ordinary entries. 'Worked, say, five hours on books. Three more hours reduced my books and rooms to apparent order, but much detail remains. Worked mildly on books.' In this region he would have said of disorder and disarray what Carlyle said to dirt, 'Thou shalt not abide with me.' As to the insides of books, his reading was miscellaneous: Madame d'Arblay, Bodley's *Remains*, Bachaumont's *Anecdotes*, Cuvier's *Theory of the Earth*, Whewell on *Astronomy*, the *Life of B. Gilpin*, Hennell's *Inquiry*, Schmidt's *Social Effects of Christianity*, Miss Martineau's *Autobiography*, Anderson on *Glory of the Bible*, Barrow's *Towards the Truth*, and so on—many of the books now stone-dead. Besides such reading as this, he 'made a beginning of a paper on Hermes, and read for it,' and worked hard at a controversial article, in reply to M. Réville, upon the Dawn of Creation and Worship. When he corrected the proof, he found it ill-written, and in truth we may rather marvel at, than admire the hardihood that handled such themes amid such distractions.[1] Much company arrived. 'Count Münster came to luncheon; long walk and talk with him. The Derby-Bedford party came and went. I had an hour's good conversation with Lord D. Tea in the open air. *Oct.* 7.—Mr. Chamberlain came. Well, and much conversation. *Oct.* 8.—Mr. Chamberlain. Three hours of conversation.

Before the end of the month the doctors reported excellently of the condition of his vocal cords, and when he started for Dalmeny and the scene of the exploits of 1880 once more, he was in spirits to enjoy 'an animated journey,' and the vast enthusiasm with which Edinburgh again received him. His speeches were marked by undiminished fire. He boldly challenged a verdict on policy in the Soudan, while freely admitting that in some points, not immaterial, his cabinet had fallen into error, though in every case the error was fostered by the party opposite; and he pointed to the vital fact that though the party opposite were in good time, they never dreamed of altering the policy. He asked triumphantly how they would have fared in the Afghan dispute, if the policy anterior to 1880 had not been repudiated. In his address he took the same valiant line about South Africa. 'In the Transvaal,' he said, 'we averted a war of European and Christian races throughout South African states, which would have been alike menacing to our power, and scandalous in the face of civilisation and of Christendom. As this has been with our opponents a favourite subject of unmeasured denunciation, so I for one hail and reciprocate their challenge, and I hope the nation will give a clear judgment on our refusal to put down liberty by force, and on the measures that have brought about the present tranquillity of South Africa.' His first speech was on Ireland, and Ireland figured, as we have seen, largely

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, November 1885; reprinted in *Later Gleanings*.

and emphatically to the last. Disestablishment was his thorniest topic, for the scare of the church in danger was working considerable havoc in England, and every word on Scottish establishment was sure to be translated to establishment elsewhere. On the day on which he was to handle it, his entry is: 'Much rumination, and made notes which in speaking I could not manage to see. Off to Edinburgh at 2.30. Back at 6. Spoke seventy minutes in Free Kirk Hall: a difficult subject. The present agitation does not strengthen in my mind the principle of establishment.' His leading text was a favourite and a salutary maxim of his, that 'it is a very serious responsibility to take political questions out of their proper time and their proper order,' and the summary of his speech was that the party was agreed upon certain large and complicated questions, such as were enough for one parliament to settle, and that it would be an error to attempt to thrust those questions aside, to cast them into the shade and the darkness, 'for the sake of a subject of which I will not undervalue the importance, but of which I utterly deny the maturity at the present moment.'[1]

On Nov. 27 the poll was taken; 11,241 electors out of 12,924, or 87 per cent, recorded their votes, and of these 7879 voted for Mr. Gladstone, and 3248 for Mr. Dalrymple, or a majority of 4631. So little impression had been made in Midlothian by Kilmainham, Majuba, Khartoum, Penjdeh, and the other party cries of a later period.

III

Let us turn to the general result, and the final composition of Mr. Gladstone's thirteenth parliament. The polls of the first three or four days were startling. It looked, in the phrases of the time, as if there were conservative reaction all round, as if the pendulum had swung back to the point of tory triumph in 1874, and as if early reverses would wind up in final rout. Where the tories did not capture the seat, their numbers rose and the liberal majorities fell. At the end of four days the liberals in England and Wales had scored 86 against 109 for their adversaries. When two-thirds of the House had been elected, the liberals counted 196, the tories 179, and the Irish nationalists 37. In spite of the early panic or exultation, it was found that in boroughs of over 100,000 the liberals had after all carried seventeen, against eight for their opponents. But the tories were victorious in a solid Liverpool, save one Irish seat; they won all the seats in Manchester save one; and in London, where liberals had been told, by those who were believed to know, that they would make a clean sweep, there were thirty-six tories against twenty-six liberals. Two members of the late liberal cabinet and three subordinate ministers were

[1] Speech in the Free Assembly Hall, Nov. 11, 1885.

thrown out. 'The verdict of the English borough constituencies,' cried the *Times*, 'will be recorded more emphatically than was even the case in 1874 in favour of the conservatives. The opposition have to thank Mr. Chamberlain not only for their defeat at the polls, but for the irremediable disruption and hopeless disorganization of the liberal party with its high historic past and its high claims to national gratitude. His achievement may give him such immortality as was won by the man who burned down the temple of Diana at Ephesus.'[1] The same writers have ever since ascribed the irremediable disruption to Mr. Gladstone and the Irish question.

Now came the counties with their newly enfranchised hosts. Here the tide flowed strong and steady. Squire and parson were amazed to see the labourer, of whose stagnant indifference to politics they had been so confident, trudging four or five miles to a political meeting, listening without asking for a glass of beer to political speeches, following point upon point, and then trudging back again dumbly chewing the cud. Politicians with gifts of rhetoric began to talk of the grand revolt of the peasants, and declared that it was the most remarkable transformation since the conversion of the Franks. Turned into prose, this meant that the liberals had extended their area into large rural provinces where hitherto tory supremacy had never been disputed. Whether or no Mr. Chamberlain had broken the party in the boroughs, his agrarian policy together with the natural uprising of the labourer against the party of squire and farmer, had saved it in the counties. The nominees of such territorial magnates as the Northumberlands, the Pembrokes, the Baths, the Bradfords, the Watkin Wynns, were all routed, and the shock to territorial influence was felt to be profound. An ardent agrarian reformer, who later became a conspicuous unionist, writing to Mr. Gladstone in July a description of a number of great rural gatherings, told him, 'One universal feature of these meetings is the joy, affection, and unbounded applause with which your name is received by these earnest men. Never in all your history had you so strong a place in the hearts of the common people, as you have to-day. It requires to be seen to be realised.'

All was at last over. It then appeared that so far from there being a second version of the great tory reaction of 1874, the liberals had now in the new parliament a majority over tories of 82, or thirty under the corresponding majority in the year of marvel, 1880. In Great Britain they had a majority of 100, being 333 against 233.[2] But they had no majority over

[1] November 26, 1885

[2] *Result of General Election of* 1885 :—

	L.	C.	P.
English and Welsh boroughs and universities	93	86	1
Metropolis	26	86	0
English and Welsh counties	152	101	0

tories and Irishmen combined. That hopeful dream had glided away through the ivory gate.

Shots between right wing and left of the liberal party were exchanged to the very last moment. When the borough elections were over, the Birmingham leader cried that so far from the loss in the boroughs being all the fault of the extreme liberals, it was just because the election had not been fought on their programme, but was fought instead on a manifesto that did not include one of the points to which the extreme liberals attached the greatest importance. For the sake of unity, they had put aside their most cherished principles, disestablishment for instance, and this, forsooth, was the result.[1] The retort came as quickly as thunder after the flash. Lord Hartington promptly protested from Matlock, that the very crisis of the electoral conflict was an ill-chosen moment for the public expression of doubt by a prominent liberal as to the wisdom of a policy accepted by the party, and announced by the acknowledged leader of the whole party. When the party had found some more tried, more trusted, more worthy leader, then might perhaps be the time to impugn the policy. These reproachful ironies of Lord Hartington boded ill for any prospect of the heroes of this fratricidal war of the platform smoothing their wrinkled fronts in a liberal cabinet.

IV

In Ireland the result shed a strong light on the debating prophecies that the extension of the county franchise would not be unfavourable to the landlord interest; that it would enable the deep conservative interest of the peasantry to vindicate itself against the nationalism of the towns; that it would prove beyond all doubt that the Irish leader did not really speak the mind of a decided majority of the people of

	L.	C.	P.
Scottish boroughs	30	3	0
,, counties	32	7	0
Ireland	0	18	85
	333	251	86

The following figures may also be found interesting:—

Election of 1868—	
English and Welsh Liberals	267
,, ,, Tories	225
Majority	42
In 1880—	
English and Welsh Liberals	284
,, ,, Tories	205
Majority	79
In 1885—	
English and Welsh Liberals	270
,, ,, Tories	223
Majority	47

[1] Mr. Chamberlain at Leicester, December 8, 1885.

Ireland. Relying on the accuracy of these abstract predictions, the Irish tories started candidates all over the country. Even some of them who passed for shrewd and candid actually persuaded themselves that they were making an impression on the constituencies. The effect of their ingenuous operations was to furnish such a measure of nationalist strength, as would otherwise have seemed incredible almost to the nationalists themselves. An instance or two will suffice. In two divisions of Cork, the tories polled 300 votes against nearly 10,000 for the nationalists. In two divisions of Mayo, the tories polled 200 votes against nearly 10,000 for the nationalists. In one division of Kilkenny there were 4000 nationalist votes against 170 for the tory, and in another division 4000 against 220. In a division of Kerry the nationalist had over 3000 votes against 30 for the tory,—a hundred to one. In prosperous counties with resident landlords and a good class of gentry such as Carlow and Kildare, in one case the popular vote was 4800 against 750, and in the other 3169 against 467. In some fifty constituencies the popular majorities ranged in round numbers from 6500 the highest, to 2400 the lowest. Besides these constituencies where a contest was so futile, were those others in which no contest was even attempted.

In Ulster a remarkable thing happened. This favoured province had in the last parliament returned nine liberals. Lord Hartington attended a banquet at Belfast (Nov. 5) just before the election. It was as unlucky an affair as the feast of Belshazzar. His mission was compared by Orange wits to that of the Greek hero who went forth to wrestle with Death for the body of an old woman.[1] The whole of the liberal candidates in Ulster fell down as dead men. Orangemen and catholics, the men who cried damnation to King William and the men who cried 'To hell with the Pope,' joined hands against them. In Belfast itself, nationalists were seen walking to the booths with orange cards in their hats to vote for orangemen against liberals.[2] It is true that the paradox did not last, and that the Pope and King William were speedily on their old terms again. Within six months, the two parties atoned for this temporary backsliding into brotherly love, by one of the most furious and protracted conflagrations that ever raged even in the holy places of Belfast. Meanwhile nationalism had made its way in the south of the province, partly by hopes of reduced rents, partly by the energy of the catholic population, who had not tasted political power for two centuries. The adhesion of their bishops to the national movement in the Monaghan election had given them the signal three years before. Fermanagh, hitherto invariably Orange, now sent two nationalists. Antrim was the single county out of the thirty-two counties of Ireland

[1] Alcestis was not old. EUR. *Alc.* 289.
[2] Macknight's *Ulster as it Is*, ii. p. 108.

that was solid against home rule, and even in Antrim in one contest the nationalist was only beaten by 35 votes.

Not a single liberal was returned in the whole of Ireland. To the last parliament she had sent fourteen. They were all out bag and baggage. Ulster now sent eighteen nationalists and seventeen tories. Out of the eighty-nine contests in Ireland, Mr. Parnell's men won no fewer than eighty-five, and in most of them they won by such overwhelming majorities as I have described. It was noticed that twenty-two of the persons elected, or more than one-fourth of the triumphant party, had been put in prison under the Act of 1881. A species of purge, moreover, had been performed. All half-hearted nationalists, the doubters and the faithless, were dismissed, and their places taken by men pledged either to obey or else go.

The British public now found out on what illusions they had for the last four years been fed. Those of them who had memories, could recollect how the Irish secretary of the day, on the third reading of the first Coercion bill in 1881, had boldly appealed from the Irish members to the people of Ireland. 'He was sure that he could appeal with confidence from gentlemen sitting below the gangway opposite to their constituents.'[1] They remembered all the talk about Mr. Parnell and his followers being a mere handful of men and not a political party at all, and the rest of it. They had now a revelation what a fool's paradise it had been.

As a supreme electoral demonstration, the Irish elections of 1885 have never been surpassed in any country. They showed that neither remedial measures nor repressive measures had made even the fleeting shadow of an impression on the tenacious sentiment of Ireland, or on the powerful organization that embodied and directed it. The Land Act had made no impression. The two Coercion Acts had made none. The imperial parliament had done its best for five years. Some of the ablest of its ministers had set zealous and intrepid hands to the task, and this was the end. Whether you counted seats or counted votes, the result could not be twisted into anything but what it was—the vehement protest of one of the three kingdoms against the whole system of its government, and a strenuous demand for its reconstruction on new foundations.

Endeavours were made to discredit so startling and unwelcome a result. It was called 'the carefully prepared verdict of a shamefully packed jury.' Much was made of the number of voters who declared themselves illiterate, said to be compelled so to do in order that the priest or other intimidatory person might see that they voted right. As a matter of fact the percentage of illiterate voters answered closely to the percentage of males over twenty-one in the census returns, who could neither read nor write. Only two petitions followed

[1] Mr. Forster, March 11, 1881.

the general election, one at Belfast against a nationalist, and the other at Derry against a tory, and in neither of the two was undue influence or intimidation alleged. The routed candidates in Ireland, like the same unlucky species elsewhere, raised the usual chorus of dolorous explanation. The register, they cried, was in a shameful condition; the polling stations were too few or too remote; the loyalists were afraid, and the poll did not represent their real numbers; people did not believe that the ballot was really secret; the percentage of illiterates was monstrous; promises and pledges went for nothing. Such are ever the too familiar voices of mortified electioneering. There was also the best known of all the conclusive topics from tory Ireland. It was all done, vowed the tories, by the bishops and clergy; they were indefatigable; they canvassed at the houses and presided at meetings; they exhorted their flocks from the altar, and they drilled them at the polling-booths. The spiritual screw of the priest and the temporal screw of the league—there was the whole secret. Such was the story, and it was not wholly devoid of truth; but then what balm, what comfort, had even the truth of it for British rulers?

Some thousands of voters stayed away from the polls. It was ingeniously explained that their confidence in British rule had been destroyed by the Carnarvon surrender; a shopkeeper would not offend his customers for the sake of a Union Jack that no longer waved triumphant in the breeze. They were like the Arab sheikhs at Berber, who, when they found that the Egyptian pashas were going to evacuate, went over to the Mahdi. The conventions appointed to select the candidates were denounced as the mere creatures of Mr. Parnell, the Grand Elector. As if anything could have shown a more politic appreciation of the circumstances. There are situations that require a dictator, not to impose an opinion, to kindle an aspiration; not to shape a demand, but to be the effective organ of opinion and demand. Now in the Irish view was one of those situations. In the last parliament twenty-six seats were held by persons designated nominal home rulers; in the new parliament, not one. Every new nationalist member pledged himself to resign whenever the parliamentary party should call upon him. Such an instrument grasped in a hand of iron was indispensable, first to compel the British government to listen, and second, to satisfy any British government disposed to listen, that in dealing with Mr. Parnell they were dealing with nationalist Ireland, and with a statesman who had the power to make his engagements good. You need greater qualities, said Cardinal De Retz, to be a good party leader than to be emperor of the universe. Ireland is not that portion of the universe in which this is least true.

CHAPTER III

A CRITICAL MONTH

(*December 1885*)

Whoever has held the post of minister for any considerable time can never absolutely, unalterably maintain and carry out his original opinions. He finds himself in the presence of situations that are not always the same—of life and growth—in connection with which he must take one course one day, and then, perhaps, another on the next day. I could not always run straight ahead like a cannon ball.—BISMARCK.

THE month of December was passed by Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden, in such depth of meditation as it is easy for us to conjecture. The composition of his party, the new situation in parliament, the mutual relations of important individuals, the Irish case, his own share in respect of the Irish case, the strange new departure in Irish policy announced and acted upon by the subsisting cabinet—from all these points of view it was now his business to survey the extraordinary scene. The knot to be unravelled in 1886 was hardly less entangled than that which engaged the powerful genius of Pitt at the opening of the century. Stripped of invidious innuendo, the words of Lord Salisbury a few weeks later state with strength and truth the problem that now confronted parliament and its chief men. 'Up to the time,' said the tory prime minister, 'when Mr. Gladstone took office, be it for good or evil, for many generations Ireland had been governed through the influence and the action of the landed gentry. I do not wish to defend that system. There is a good deal to be said for it, and a good deal to be said against it. What I wish to insist upon is, not that that system was good, but that the statesman who undertook to overthrow it, should have had something to put in its place. He utterly destroyed it. By the Land Act of 1870, by the Ballot Act of 1872, by the Land Act of 1881, and last of all by the Reform bill of 1884, the power of the landed gentry in Ireland is absolutely shattered; and he now stands before the formidable problem of a country deprived of a system of government under which it had existed for many generations, and absolutely without even a sketch of a substitute by which the ordinary

functions of law and order can be maintained. Those changes which he introduced into the government of Ireland were changes that were admirable from a parliamentary point of view. They were suited to the dominant humour of the moment. But they were barren of any institutions by which the country could be governed and kept in prosperity for the future.'[1] This is a statement of the case that biographer and historian alike should ponder. Particularly should they remember that both parties had renounced coercion.

Mr. Gladstone has publicly explained the working of his mind, and both his private letters at the time, and many a conversation later, attest the hold which the new aspect, however chimerical it may now seem to those who do not take long views, had gained upon him. He could not be blind to the fact that the action and the language of the tory ministers during the last six months had shown an unquestionable readiness to face the new necessities of a complex situation with new methods. Why should not a solution of the present difficulties be sought in the same co-operation of parties, that had been as advantageous as it was indispensable in other critical occasions of the century? He recalled other leading precedents of national crisis. There was the repeal of the Test Act in 1828; catholic emancipation in 1829; the repeal of the corn law in 1846; the extension of the franchise in 1867. In the history of these memorable transactions, Mr. Gladstone perceived it to be extremely doubtful whether any one of these measures, all carried as they were by tory governments, could have become law except under the peculiar conditions which secured for each of them both the aid of the liberal vote in the House of Commons, and the authority possessed by all tory governments in the House of Lords. What was the situation? The ministerial party just reached the figure of two hundred and fifty-one. Mr. Gladstone had said in the course of the election that for a government in a minority to deal with the Irish question would not be safe, such an operation could not but be attended by danger; but the tender of his support to Lord Salisbury was a demonstration that he thought the operation might still properly be undertaken.[2]

To Herbert Gladstone.

December 10, 1885.—1. The nationalists have run in political alliance with the tories for years; more especially for six months; most of all at the close during the elections, when *they* have made us 335 (say) against 250 [conservatives] instead of 355 against 230. This alliance is therefore at its zenith. 2. The question of Irish government ought for the highest reasons to be settled at once, and settled by the allied forces, (1) because they have the government, (2) because their measure

[1] Lord Salisbury, at a dinner given in London to the four conservative members for Hertfordshire, February 17, 1886.

[2] *Special Aspects of the Irish Question*, p. 18.

will have fair play from all, most, or many of us, which a measure of ours would not have from the tories. 3. As the allied forces are half the House, so that there is not a majority against them, no constitutional principle is violated by allowing the present cabinet to continue undisturbed for the purpose in view. 4. The plan for Ireland ought to be produced by the government of the day. Principles may be laid down by others, but not the detailed interpretation of them in a measure. I have publicly declared I produce no plan until the government has arrived at some issue with the Irish, as I hope they will. 5. If the moment ever came when a plan had to be considered with a view to production on behalf of the liberal party, I do not at present see how such a question could be dissociated from another vital question, namely, who are to be the government. For a government alone can carry a measure, though some outline of essentials might be put out in a motion or resolution.

Happening in these days to meet in the neighbouring palace of a whig magnate, Mr. Balfour, a young but even then an important member of the government, with whom as a veteran with a junior of high promise he had long been on terms of friendly intimacy, Mr. Gladstone began an informal conversation with him upon the condition of Ireland, on the stir that it was making in men's minds, and on the urgency of the problem. The conversation he followed up by a letter (Dec. 20). Every post, he said, bore him testimony to the growing ferment. In urging how great a calamity it would be if so vast a question should fall into the lines of party conflict, he expressed his desire to see it taken up by the government, and to be able, with reserve of necessary freedom, to co-operate in their design. Mr. Balfour replied with courteous scepticism, but promised to inform Lord Salisbury. The tactical computation was presumably this, that Lord Salisbury would lose the Orange group from Ireland and the extreme tories in England, but would keep the bulk of his party. On the other hand, Mr. Gladstone in supporting a moderate home rule would drop some of the old whigs and some of the extreme radicals, but he too would keep the bulk of the liberal party. Therefore, even if Mr. Parnell and his followers should find the scheme too moderate to be endurable, still Lord Salisbury with Mr. Gladstone's help would settle the Irish question as Peel with the help of the whigs settled the question of corn.

Both at the time and afterwards Mr. Gladstone was wont to lay great stress upon the fact that he had opened this suggestion and conveyed this proffer of support. For instance, he writes to Lord Hartington (Dec. 20): 'On Tuesday I had a conversation with Balfour at Eaton, which in conformity with my public statements, I think, conveyed informally a hope that they would act, as the matter is so serious, and as its becoming a party question would be a great national calamity. I have written to him to say (without speaking for others) that if they can make a proposal for the purpose of settling definitely

the question of Irish government, I shall wish with proper reserves to treat it in the spirit in which I have treated Afghanistan and the Balkan Peninsula.'

The language of Lord Carnarvon when he took office and of Lord Salisbury at Newport, coupled with the more substantial fact of the alliance between tories and nationalists before and during the election, no doubt warranted Mr. Gladstone's assumption that the alliance might continue, and that the talk of a new policy had been something more than an electioneering manœuvre. Yet the importance that he always attached to his offer of support for a definite settlement, or in plainer English, some sort of home rule, implies a certain simplicity. He forgot in his patriotic zeal the party system. The tory leader, capable as his public utterances show of piercing the exigencies of Irish government to the quick, might possibly, in the course of responsible consultations with opponents for a patriotic purpose, have been drawn by argument and circumstance on to the ground of Irish autonomy, which he had hitherto considered, and considered with apparent favour, only in the dim distance of abstract meditation or through the eyes of Lord Carnarvon. The abstract and intellectual temperament is sometimes apt to be dogged and stubborn; on the other hand, it is often uncommonly elastic. Lord Salisbury's clear and rationalising understanding might have been expected to carry him to a thoroughgoing experiment to get rid of a deep and inveterate disorder. If he thought it politic to assent to communication with Mr. Parnell, why should he not listen to overtures from Mr. Gladstone? On the other hand, Lord Salisbury's hesitation in facing the perils of an Irish settlement in reliance upon the co-operation of political opponents is far from being unintelligible. His inferior parliamentary strength would leave him at the mercy of an extremely formidable ally. He may have anticipated that, apart from the ordinary temptations of every majority to overthrow a minority, all the strong natural impulses of the liberal leader, his vehement sympathy with the principle of nationality, the irresistible attraction for him of all the grand and eternal commonplaces of liberty and self-government, would inevitably carry him much further on the Irish road than either Lord Salisbury himself may have been disposed to travel, or than he could be sure of persuading his party to follow. He may well have seen grounds for pause before committing himself to so delicate and precarious an enterprise.

II

Early in December Lord Granville was at Hawarden, and the two discussed the crucial perplexities of the hour, not going further than agreement that responsibility lay with the government, and that the best chance for settlement lay in

large concession. From Hawarden Lord Granville went to Chatsworth, where he found Lord Spencer on his way to visit Mr. Gladstone; but nothing important passed among the three leaders thus brought together under the roof of Lord Hartington. Lord Granville imparted to Lord Spencer and Lord Hartington that Mr. Gladstone was full of Ireland in the direction of some large concession of self-government. The host discussed the thing dispassionately without much expression of opinion. Proceeding to Hawarden, Lord Spencer was there joined by Lord Rosebery. Their chief repeated to them the propositions already stated (p. 193). Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville (Dec. 9):—

> You have, I think, acted very prudently in not returning here. It would have been violently canvassed. Your report is as favourable as could be expected. I think my conversations with Rosebery and Spencer have also been satisfactory. What I expect is a healthful, slow fermentation in many minds, working towards the final product. It is a case of between the devil and the deep sea. But our position is a bed of roses, compared with that of the government. . . .

Lord Spencer was hardly second in weight to Mr. Gladstone himself. His unrivalled experience of Irish administration, his powers of fixed decision in difficult circumstances, and the impression of high public spirit, uprightness, and fortitude, which had stamped itself deep upon the public mind, gave him a force of moral authority in an Irish crisis that was unique. He knew the importance of a firm and continuous system in Ireland. Such a system he had inflexibly carried out. Extreme concessions had been extorted from him by the radicals in the cabinet, and when the last moment of the eleventh hour had arrived, it looked as if he would break up the government by insisting. Then the government was turned out, and the party of 'law and order' came in. He saw his firm and continuous system at the first opportunity flouted and discarded. He was aware, as officials and as the public were aware, that his successor at Dublin Castle made little secret that he had come over to reverse the policy. Lord Spencer, too, well knew in the last months of his reign at Dublin that his own system, in spite of outward success, had made no mark upon Irish disaffection. It is no wonder that after his visit to Hawarden, he laboured hard at consideration of the problem that the strange action of government on the one hand, and the speculations of a trusted leader on the other, had forced upon him. On Mr. Gladstone he pressed the question whether a general support should be given to Irish autonomy as a principle, before particulars were matured. In any case he perceived that the difficulty of governing Ireland might well be increased by knowledge of the mere fact that Mr. Gladstone and himself, whether in office or in opposition, were looking in the direction of autonomy. Somebody said to Mr. Gladstone,

people talked about his turning Spencer round his thumb. 'It would be more true,' he replied, 'that he had turned me round his.' That is, I suppose, by the lessons of Lord Spencer's experience.

In the middle of the month Lord Hartington asked Mr. Gladstone for information as to his views and intentions on the Irish question as developed by the general election. The rumours in the newspapers, he said, as well as in private letters, were so persistent that it was hard to believe them without foundation. Mr. Gladstone replied to Lord Hartington in a letter of capital importance in its relation to the prospects of party union (Dec. 17):—

To Lord Hartington.

The whole stream of public excitement is now turned upon me, and I am pestered with incessant telegrams which I have no defence against, but either suicide or Parnell's method of self-concealment. The truth is, I have more or less of opinions and ideas, but no intentions or negotiations. In these ideas and opinions there is, I think, little that I have not more or less conveyed in public declarations; in principle nothing. I will try to lay them before you. I consider that Ireland has now spoken; and that an effort ought to be made *by the government* without delay to meet her demands for the management by an Irish legislative body of Irish as distinct from imperial affairs. Only a government can do it, and a tory government can do it more easily and safely than any other. There is first a postulate that the state of Ireland shall be such as to warrant it. The conditions of an admissible plan are—

1. Union of the empire and due supremacy of parliament.

2. Protection for the minority—a difficult matter on which I have talked much with Spencer, certain points, however, remaining to be considered.

3. Fair allocation of imperial charges.

4. A statutory basis seems to me better and safer than the revival of Grattan's parliament, but I wish to hear much more upon this, as the minds of men are still in so crude a state on the whole subject.

5. Neither as opinions nor as intentions have I to any one alive promulgated these ideas as decided on by me.

6. As to intentions, I am determined to have none at present, to leave space to the government—I should wish to encourage them if I properly could—above all, on no account to say or do anything which would enable the nationalists to establish rival biddings between us. If this storm of rumours continues to rage, it may be necessary for me to write some new letter to my constituents, but I am desirous to do nothing, simply leaving the field open for the government until time makes it necessary to decide. Of our late colleagues I have had most communication with Granville, Spencer, Rosebery. Would you kindly send this on to Granville.

I think you will find this in conformity with my public declarations, though some blanks are filled up. I have in truth thought it my duty without in the least committing myself or any one else, to think through the subject as well as I could, being equally convinced of its

urgency and bigness. If H. and N. are with you, pray show them this letter, which is a very hasty one, for I am so battered with telegrams that I hardly know whether I stand on my head or my heels. . . .

With regard to the letter I sent you, my opinion is that there is a Parnell party and a separation or civil war party, and the question which is to have the upper hand will have to be decided in a limited time. My earnest recommendation to everybody is not to commit himself. Upon this rule, under whatever pressure, I shall act as long as I can. There shall be no private negotiation carried on by me, but the time may come when I shall be obliged to speak publicly. Meanwhile I hope you will keep in free and full communication with old colleagues. Pray put questions if this letter seems ambiguous. . . .

Pray remember that I am at all times ready for personal communication, should you think it desirable.

III

Before receiving this letter, Lord Hartington was startled, as all the world was, to come on something in the newspapers that instantly created a new situation. Certain prints published on December 17 what was alleged to be Mr. Gladstone's scheme for an Irish settlement.[1] It proposed in terms the creation of an Irish parliament. Further particulars were given in detail, but with these we need not concern ourselves. The Irish parliament was enough. The public mind, bewildered as it was by the situation that the curious issue of the election had created, was thrown by this announcement into extraordinary commotion. The facts are these. Mr. Herbert Gladstone visited London at this time (Dec. 14), partly in consequence of a speech made a few days before by Sir C. Dilke, and of the club talk which the speech had set going. It was taken to mean that he and Mr. Chamberlain, the two radical leaders, thought that such an Irish policy as might be concocted between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell would receive no general support from the liberal party, and that it would be much safer to leave the tories in power, in the expectation that some moderate measures of reform might be got from them, and that meanwhile they would become committed with the Irishmen. Tactics of this kind were equivalent to the exclusion of Mr. Gladstone, for in every letter that he wrote he pronounced the Irish question urgent. Mr. Herbert Gladstone had not been long in London before the impression became strong upon him, that in the absence of a guiding hint upon the Irish question, the party might be drifting towards a split. Under this impression he had a conversation with the chief of an important press agency, who had previously warned him that the party was all at sea. To this gentleman, in an interview at which no notes were

[1] These statements first appeared in the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Standard* on Dec. 17, and in a communication from the National Press Agency issued on the night of Dec. 16. They were not published in the *Times* and other London morning papers until Dec. 18. Mr. Gladstone's telegram was printed in the evening papers on Dec. 17.

taken and nothing read from papers—so little formal was it—he told his own opinions on the assumed opinions of Mr. Gladstone, all in general terms, and only with the negative view of preventing friendly writers from falling into traps. Unluckily it would seem to need at least the genius of a Bismarck, to perform with precision and success the delicate office of inspiring a modern oracle on the journalistic tripod. Here, what was intended to be a blameless negative soon swelled, as the oracular fumes are wont to do, into a giant positive. In conversations with another journalist, who was also his private friend (Dec. 15), he used language which the friend took to justify the pretty unreserved announcement that Mr. Gladstone was about to set to work in earnest on home rule.

'With all these matters,' Mr. Herbert Gladstone wrote to a near relative at the time, 'my father had no more connection than the man in the moon, and until each event occurred, he knew no more of it than the man in the street.' Mr. Gladstone on the same day (Dec. 17) told the world by telegraph that the statement was not an accurate representation of his views, but a speculation upon them; he added that it had not been published with his knowledge or authority. There can be no doubt, whatever else may be said, that the publication was neither to his advantage, nor in conformity with his view of the crisis. No statesman in our history has ever been more careful of the golden rule of political strategy—to neglect of which Frederick the Great traced the failure of Joseph II.—not to take the second step before you have taken the first. Neither scheme nor intention had yet crystallised in his mind. Never was there a moment when every consideration of political prudence more imperatively counselled silence. Mr. Gladstone's denial of all responsibility was not found to be an explicit contradiction; it was a repudiation of the two newspapers, but it was not a repudiation of an Irish parliament. Therefore people believed the story the more. Friends and foes became more than ever alert, excited, alarmed, and in not a few cases vehemently angry. This unauthorised publication with the qualified denial, placed Mr. Gladstone in the very position which he declared that he would not take up; it made him a trespasser on ground that belonged to the government. Any action on his part would in his own view not only be unnecessary; it would be unwarrantable; it would be in the highest degree injurious and mischievous.[1] Yet whatever it amounted to, some of this very injury and mischief followed.

Lord Hartington no sooner saw what was then called the Hawarden kite flying in the sky, than he felt its full significance. He at once wrote to Mr. Gladstone, partly in reply to the letter of the 17th already given, and pointed with frankness to what

[1] Speech on the Address, January 21, 1886.

would follow. No other subject would be discussed until the meeting of parliament, and it would be discussed with the knowledge, or what would pass for knowledge, that in Mr. Gladstone's opinion the time for concession to Ireland had arrived, and that concession was practicable. In replying to his former letter Mr. Gladstone had invited personal communication, and Lord Hartington thought that he might in a few days avail himself of it, though (December 18) he feared that little advantage would follow. In spite of urgent arguments from wary friends, Lord Hartington at once proceeded to write to his chairman in Lancashire (December 20), informing the public that no proposals of liberal policy on the Irish demand had been communicated to him; for his own part he stood to what he said at the election. This letter was the first bugle note of an inevitable conflict between Mr. Gladstone and those who by and by became the whig dissentients.

To Lord Hartington resistance to any new Irish policy came easily, alike by temperament and conviction. Mr. Chamberlain was in a more embarrassing position; and his first speech after the election showed it. 'We are face to face,' he said, 'with a very remarkable demonstration by the Irish people. They have shown that as far as regards the great majority of them, they are earnestly in favour of a change in the administration of their government, and of some system which would give them a larger control of their domestic affairs. Well, we ourselves by our public declarations and by our liberal principles are pledged to acknowledge the justice of this claim.' What was the important point at the moment, Mr. Chamberlain declared that in his judgment the time had hardly arrived when the liberal party could interfere safely or with advantage to settle this great question. 'Mr. Parnell has appealed to the tories. Let him settle accounts with his new friends. Let him test their sincerity and goodwill; and if he finds that he has been deceived, he will approach the liberal party in a spirit of reason and conciliation.'[1]

Translated into the language of parliamentary action, this meant that the liberals, with a majority of eighty-two over the tories, were to leave the tory minority undisturbed in office, on the chance of their bringing in general measures of which liberals could approve, and making Irish proposals to which Mr. Parnell, in the absence of competition for his support, might give at least provisional assent. In principle, these tactics implied, whether right or wrong, the old-fashioned union of the two British parties against the Irish. Were the two hundred and fifty tories to be left in power, to carry out all the promises of the general election, and fulfil all the hopes of a new parliament chosen on a new system? The Hawarden

[1] At the Birmingham Reform Club, Dec. 17, 1885.

letter-bag was heavy with remonstrances from newly elected liberals against any such course.

Second only to Mr. Gladstone in experience of stirring and perilous positions, Lord Granville described the situation to one of his colleagues as nothing less than 'thoroughly appalling.' A great catastrophe, he said, might easily result from any of the courses open: from the adoption of coercion by either government or opposition; from the adoption by either of concession; from the attempt to leave the state of Ireland as it was. If, as some think, a great catastrophe did in the end result from the course that Mr. Gladstone was now revolving in his own mind at Hawarden, and that he had commended to the meditations of his most important colleagues, what alternative was feasible?

IV

The following letters set out the various movements in a drama that was now day by day, through much confusion and bewilderment, approaching its climax.

To Lord Granville.

December 18, '85.— . . . Thinking incessantly about the matter, speaking freely and not with finality to you, and to Rosebery and Spencer—the only colleagues I have seen—I have trusted to writing to Hartington (who had had Harcourt and Northbrook with him) and to you for Derby.

If I have made *any* step in advance at all, which I am not sure of, it has most certainly been in the direction of leaving the field open for the government, encouraging them to act, and steadily refusing to say or do *anything* like negotiation on my own behalf. So I think Derby will see that in the main I am certainly with him. . . . What will Parnell do? What will the government do? How can we decide without knowing or trying to know, both if we can, but at any rate the second? This letter is at your discretion to use in proper quarters.

December 22.—In the midst of these troubles, I look to you as the great feud-composer, and your note just received is just what I should have hoped and expected. Hartington wrote to me on Saturday that he was going up to see Goschen, but as I thought inviting a letter from me, which I wrote [December 17, above], and it was with no small surprise that I read him yesterday in the *Times*. However, I repeated yesterday to R. Grosvenor all that I have said to you about what seems to me the plain duty of the *party*, in the event of a severance between nationalists and tories. Meantime I care not who knows my anxiety to prevent that severance, and for that reason among others to avoid all communications of ideas and intentions which could tend to bring it about.

On December 27, Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden:—

I have been asked to request you to call a cabinet of your late colleagues to discuss the present state of affairs. I have declined, giving my reasons, which appear to me to be good. At the same time, I think it would calm some fussiness that exists, if you let it be known to a few

that you will be in town and ready for consultation, before the actual meeting.

Mr. Gladstone answered, as those acquainted with his modes of mind might have been sure that he would :—

December 28.—Thank you for stopping the request to which your letter of yesterday refers. A cabinet does not exist out of office, and no one in his senses could covenant to call *the late cabinet* together, I think, even if there were something on which it was ready to take counsel, which at this moment there is not. On the other hand, you will have seen from my letter that the idea before me has been that of going unusual lengths in the way of consulting beforehand, not only leading men but the party, or undertaking some special obligation to be assured of their concurrence generally, before undertaking new responsibilities.

The one great difficulty in proceeding to consult now, I think, is that we cannot define the situation for ourselves, as an essential element of it is the relation between nationalists and tories, which they—not we—have to settle. If we meet on Tuesday 12th to choose a Speaker, so far as I can learn, regular business will not begin before the 19th. By the 12th we shall have given ourselves a much better chance of knowing how the two parties stand together; and there will be plenty of time for our consultations. Thus at least I map out the time; pray give me any comments you think required.

I begged you to keep Derby informed; would you kindly do the same with Harcourt. Rosebery goes to London to-morrow.

Two days before this resistance to the request for a meeting, he had written to Lord Granville with an important enclosure :—

December 26, 1885.—I have put down on paper in a memorandum as well as I can, the possible forms of the question which may have to be decided at the opening of the session. I went over the ground in conversation with you, and afterwards with R. Grosvenor, and I requested R. Grosvenor, who was going to London, to speak to Hartington in that sense. After his recent act of publication, I should not like to challenge him by sending him the written paper. Please, however, to send it on to Spencer, who will send it back to me.

The memorandum itself must here be quoted, for it sets out in form, succinct, definite, and exhaustive, the situation as Mr. Gladstone at that time regarded it :—

Secret. *Hawarden Castle, Chester, Dec.* 26, 1885.

1. Government should act.
2. Nationalists should support them in acting.
3. I have done what I can to bring about (1). I am confident the nationalists know my desire. They also publicly know there can be no plan from me in the present circumstances.
4. If (1) and (2) come about, we, who are half the House of Commons, may under the circumstances be justified in waiting for the production of a plan.
5. This would be in every sense the best situation.
6. But if ministers refuse to take up the question—or if from their not actually taking it up, or on any grounds, the nationalists publicly dissolve

their alliance with them, the government then have a party of 250 in the face of 420, and in the face of 335 who were elected to oppose them.

7. The basis of our system is that the ministry shall have the confidence of the House of Commons. The exception is, when it is about to appeal to the people. The rule applies most strongly when an election has just taken place. Witness 1835, 1841, 1859, and the *three* last elections, after each of which the rule has been acted upon, silent inference standing instead of a vote.

8. The present circumstances warrant, I think, an understanding as above, between ministers and the nationalists; but not one between us and the nationalists.

9. If from any cause the alliance of the tories and nationalists which did exist, and presumably does exist, should be known to be dissolved, I do not see how it is possible for what would then be the liberal majority to shrink from the duty appertaining to it as such, and to leave the business of government to the 250 men whom it was elected to oppose.

10. This looks towards an amendment to the Address, praying her Majesty to choose ministers possessed of the confidence of the House of Commons.

11. Which under the circumstances should, I think, have the sanction of a previous meeting of the party.

12. An attempt would probably be made to traverse the proceeding by drawing me on the Irish question.

13. It is impossible to justify the contention that *as a condition previous* to asserting the right and duty of a parliamentary majority, the party or the leaders should commit themselves on a measure about which they can form no final judgment, until by becoming the government they can hold all the necessary communications.

14. But in all likelihood jealousy will be stronger than logic; and to obviate such jealousy, it might be right for me [to go] to the very farthest allowable point.

15. The case supposed is, the motion made—carried—ministers resign —Queen sends for me.

Might I go so far as to say at the first meeting that in the case supposed, I should only accept the trust if assured of the adequate, that is of the general support of the party to a plan of duly guarded home rule?

16. If that support were withheld, it would be my duty to stand aside.

17. In that event it would, I consider, become the duty of that portion of the party, which was not prepared to support me in an effort to frame a plan of duly guarded home rule, to form a government itself if invited by the Queen to do so.

18. With me the Irish question would, of course, remain paramount; but preferring a liberal government without an adequate Irish measure to a tory government similarly lacking, such a liberal government would be entitled to the best general support I could give it.

The reference of this memorandum to Lords Granville and Spencer was regarded as one of the first informal steps towards a consultation of leaders. On receiving Lord Spencer's reply on the point of procedure Mr. Gladstone wrote to him (December 30):—

To Lord Spencer.

I understand your idea to be that inasmuch as leaders of the party are likely to be divided on the subject of a bold Irish measure, and a divergence might be exhibited in a vote on the Address, it may be better to allow the tory government, with the 250 supporters in a house of 670, to assume the direction of the session and continue the administration of imperial affairs. I do not undervalue the dangers of the other course. But let us look at this one—

1. It is an absolute novelty.

2. Is it not a novelty which strikes at the root of our parliamentary government? under which the first duty of a majority freshly elected, according to a uniform course of precedent and a very clear principle, is to establish a government which has its confidence.

3. Will this abdication of primary duty avert or materially postpone the (apprehended) disruption of the party? Who can guarantee us against an Irish or independent amendment to the Address? The government must in any case produce at once their Irish plan. What will have been gained by waiting for it? The Irish will know three things—(1) That I am conditionally in favour of at least examining their demand. (2) That from the nature of the case, I must hold this question paramount to every interest of party. (3) That a part, to speak within bounds, of the liberal party will follow me in this respect. Can it be supposed that in these circumstances they will long refrain, or possibly refrain at all? With their knowledge of possibilities behind them, *dare* they long refrain? An immense loss of dignity in a great crisis of the empire would attend the forcing of our hands by the Irish or otherwise. There is no necessity for an instant decision. My desire is thoroughly to shake up all the materials of the question. The present leaning of my mind is to consider the faults and dangers of abstention, greater than those of a more decided course. Hence, in part, my great anxiety that the present government should move. Please send this on to Granville.

Finding Mr. Gladstone immovable at Hawarden, four of the members of the last liberal cabinet of both wings met at Devonshire House on new year's day. All, save one, found themselves hopeless, especially after the Hawarden revelations, as to the possibility of governing Ireland by mere repression. Lord Hartington at once communicated the desires of the conclave for information of his views and designs. Mr. Gladstone replied (January 2, 1886):—

On the 17th December I communicated to you *all* the opinions I had formed on the Irish question. But on the 21st you published in the *Times* a re-affirmation of opposite opinions.

On the Irish question, I have not a word to add to that letter. I am indeed doing what little the pressure of correspondence permits, to prepare myself by study and reflection. My object was to facilitate study by you and others—I cannot say it was wholly gained. But I have done nothing, and shall do nothing, to convert those opinions into intentions, for I have not the material before me. I do not know whether my 'postulate' is satisfied. . . . I have taken care by my letter of the 17th that you should know my opinions *en bloc*. You are quite welcome

to show it, if you think fit, to those whom you met. But Harcourt has, I believe, seen it, and the others, if I mistake not, know the substance. . . . There is no doubt that a very grave situation is upon us, a little sooner or a little later. All my desire and thought was how to render it less grave, for next to the demands of a question far higher than all or any party interests, is my duty to labour for the consolidation of the party. . . . Pray show this letter, if you think fit, to those on whose behalf you write. I propose to be available in London about 4 P.M., for any who wish to see me.

V

Signals and intimations were not wholly wanting from the Irish camp. It was known among the subalterns in that rather impenetrable region, partly by the light of nature, partly by the indiscretions of dubiously accredited ambassadors, that Mr. Gladstone was not disposed on any terms to meet the Irish demand by more coercion. For the liberal party as a whole the Irish had a considerable aversion. The violent scenes that attended the Coercion bill of 1881, the interchange of hard words, the suspensions, the imprisonments — all mechanically acquiesced in by the ministerial majority—had engendered both bitterness and contempt. The Irishmen did not conceal the satisfaction with which they saw the defeat of some of those liberals who had openly gloated over their arrests and all the rest of their humiliations. Mr. Gladstone, it is true, had laid a heavy and chastening hand upon them. Yet, even when the struggle had been fiercest, with the quick intuition of a people long oppressed, they detected a note of half-sympathetic passion which convinced them that he would be their friend if he could, and would help them when he might.

Mr. Parnell was not open to impressions of this order. He had a long memory for injuries, and he had by no means satisfied himself that the same injuries might not recur. As soon as the general election was over, he had at once set to work upon the result. Whatever might be right for others, his line of tactics was plain—to ascertain from which of the two English parties he was most likely to obtain the response that he desired to the Irish demand, and then to concert the procedure best fitted to place that party in power. He was at first not sure whether Lord Salisbury would renounce the Irish alliance after it had served the double purpose of ousting the liberals from office, and then reducing their numbers at the election. He seems also to have counted upon further communications with Lord Carnarvon, and this expectation was made known to Mr. Gladstone, who expressed his satisfaction at the news, though it was also made known to him that Mr. Parnell doubted Lord Carnarvon's power to carry out his unquestionably favourable dispositions. He at the same time very naturally did his best to get some light as to

Mr. Gladstone's own frame of mind. If neither party would offer a solution of the problem of Irish government, Mr. Parnell would prefer to keep the tories in office, as they would at least work out gradually a solution of the problems of Irish land. To all these indirect communications Mr. Gladstone's consistent reply was that Mr. Parnell's immediate business was with the government of the day, first, because only the government could handle the matter; second, because a tory government with the aid that it would receive from liberals, might most certainly, safely, and quickly settle it. He declined to go beyond the ground already publicly taken by him, unless by way of a further public declaration. On to this new ground he would not go, until assured that the government had had a fair opportunity given them.

By the end of December Mr. Parnell decided that there was not the slightest possibility of any settlement being offered by the conservatives under the existing circumstances. 'Whatever chance there was,' he said, 'disappeared when the seemingly authoritative statements of Mr. Gladstone's intention to deal with the question were published.' He regarded it as quite probable that in spite of a direct refusal from the tories, the Irish members might prefer to pull along with them, rather than run the risk of fresh coercion from the liberals, should the latter return to power. 'Supposing,' he argued, 'that the liberals came into office, and that they offered a settlement of so incomplete a character that we could not accept it, or that owing to defections they could not carry it, should we not, if any long interval occurred before the proposal of a fresh settlement, incur considerable risk of further coercion?' At any rate, they had better keep the government in, rather than oust them in order to admit Lord Hartington or Mr. Chamberlain with a new coercion bill in their pockets.

Foreseeing these embarrassments, Mr. Gladstone wrote in a final memorandum (December 24) of this eventful year, 'I used every effort to obtain a clear majority at the election, and failed. I am therefore at present a man in chains. Will ministers bring in a measure? If "Aye," I see my way. If "No": that I presume puts an end to all relations of confidence between nationalists and tories. If that is done, I have then upon me, as is evident, the responsibilities of *the leader of a majority*. But what if neither Aye nor No can be had—will the nationalists then continue their support and thus relieve me from responsibility, or withdraw their support [from the government], and thus change essentially my position? Nothing but a public or published dissolution of a relation of amity publicly sealed could be of any avail.'

So the year ended.

CHAPTER IV

FALL OF THE FIRST SALISBURY GOVERNMENT

(*January 1886*)

Historians coolly dissect a man's thoughts as they please; and label them like specimens in a naturalist's cabinet. Such a thing, they argue, was done for mere personal aggrandizement; such a thing for national objects; such a thing from high religious motives. In real life we may be sure it was not so.—GARDINER.

MINISTERS meanwhile hesitated, balanced, doubted, and wavered. Their party was in a minority, and so they had a fair plea for resigning and not meeting the new parliament. On the other hand, they had a fair plea for continuing in office, for though they were in a minority, no other party had a majority. Nobody knew what the Hartington whigs would do, or what the Irish would do. There seemed to be many chances for expert angling. Then with what policy were they to meet the House of Commons? They might adhere to the conciliatory policy of the summer and autumn, keep clear of repressive legislation, and make a bold attempt in the direction of self-government. Taking the same courageous plunge as was taken by Wellington and Peel in 1829, by Peel in the winter of 1845, by Disraeli in 1867, they might carry the declarations made by Lord Carnarvon on behalf of the government in July to their only practical conclusion. But then they would have broken up their party, as Wellington and Peel broke it up; and Lord Salisbury may have asked himself whether the national emergency warranted the party risk.

Resistance then to the Irish demand being assumed, various tactics came under review. They might begin by asking for a vote of confidence, saying plainly that if they were turned out and Mr. Gladstone were put in, he would propose home rule. In that case a majority was not wholly impossible, for the whig wing might come over, nor was it quite certain that the Irish would help to put the government out. At any rate the debate would force Mr. Gladstone into the open, and even if they did not have a majority, they would be in a position to advise immediate dissolution on the issue of home rule.

The only other course open to the cabinet was to turn their

backs upon the professions of the summer; to throw overboard the Carnarvon policy as a cargo for which there was no longer a market; to abandon a great experiment after a ludicrously short trial; and to pick up again the old instrument of coercion, which not six months before they had with such elaborate ostentation condemned and discarded. This grand manœuvre was kept carefully in the background, until there had been time for the whole chapter of accidents to exhaust itself, and it had become certain that no trump cards were falling to the ministerial hand. Not until this was quite clear, did ministers reveal their poignant uneasiness about the state of Ireland.

In the middle of October (1885) Lord Randolph Churchill visited the viceroy in Dublin, and found him, as he afterwards said, extremely anxious and alarmed at the growing power of the National League. Yet the viceroy was not so anxious and alarmed as to prevent Lord Randolph from saying at Birmingham a month after, on November 20, that up to the present time their decision to preserve order by the same laws as in England had been abundantly justified, and that on the whole crime and outrage had greatly diminished. This was curious, and shows how tortuous was the crisis. Only a fortnight later the cabinet met (December 2), and heard of the extraordinary development and unlimited resources of the league. All the rest of the month of December,—so the public were by and by informed,—the condition of Ireland was the subject of the most anxious consideration. With great deliberation, a decision was at length reached. It was that ordinary law had broken down, and that exceptional means of repression were indispensable. Then a serious and embarrassing incident occurred. Lord Carnarvon 'threw up the government of Ireland,' and was followed by Sir William Hart Dyke, the chief secretary.[1] A measure of coercion was prepared, its provisions all drawn in statutory form, but who was to warrant the necessity for it to parliament?[2]

Though the viceroy's retirement was not publicly known until the middle of January, yet so early as December 17 the prime minister had applied to Mr. Smith, then secretary of state for war, to undertake the duties of Irish government.[3] This was one of the sacrifices that no man of public spirit can ever refuse, and Mr. Smith, who had plenty of public spirit, became Irish secretary. Still when parliament assembled more than a month after Lord Salisbury's letter to his new chief secretary, no policy was announced. Even on the second night of the session Mr. Smith answered questions for the war office.

1 Correspondence between Lord Salisbury and Lord Carnarvon, *Times*, Jan. 16, 1886.
2 *Hansard*, 302, pp. 1929-1993. March 4, 1886. See also Lord Randolph Churchill at Paddington, Feb. 13, 1886.
3 Maxwell's *Life of W. H. Smith*, ii. p. 163.

The parliamentary mystification was complete. Who, where, and what was the Irish government?

The parliamentary session was rapidly approaching, and Mr. Gladstone had good information of the various quarters whence the wind was blowing. Rumours reached him (January 9) from the purlieus of Parliament Street, that general words of confidence in the government would be found in the Queen's Speech. Next he was told of the report that an amendment would be moved by the ultras of law and order,—the same who had mutinied on the Maamtrasna debate,—censuring ministers for having failed to uphold the authority of the Queen. The same correspondent (January 15), who was well able to make his words good, wrote to Mr. Gladstone that even though home rule might perhaps not be in a parliamentary sense before the House, it was in a most distinct manner before the country, and no political party could avoid expressing an opinion upon it. On the same day another colleague of hardly less importance drew attention to an article in a journal supposed to be inspired by Lord Randolph, to the effect that conciliation in Ireland had totally failed, that Lord Carnarvon had retired because that policy was to be reversed and he was not the man for the rival policy of vigour, and finally, that the new policy would probably be announced in the Queen's Speech; in no circumstances would it be possible to avoid a general action on the Address.

II

The current of domestic life at Hawarden, in the midst of all these perplexities, flowed in its usual ordered channels. The engagement of his second daughter stirred Mr. Gladstone's deepest interest. He practises occasional woodcraft with his sons, though ending his seventy-sixth year. He spends a morning in reviewing his private money affairs, the first time for three years. He never misses church. He corrects the proofs of an article on Huxley; carries on tolerably profuse correspondence, coming to very little; he works among his books, and arranges his papers; reads Beaconsfield's *Home Letters*, Lord Stanhope's *Pitt*, Macaulay's *Warren Hastings*, which he counts the most brilliant of all that illustrious man's performances; Maine on *Popular Government*; *King Solomon's Mines*; something of Tolstoy; Dicey's *Law of the Constitution*, where a chapter on semi-sovereign assemblies made a deep impression on him in regard to the business that now absorbed his mind. Above all, he nearly every day reads Burke:—'*December* 18.—Read Burke; what a magazine of wisdom on Ireland and America. *January* 9.—Made many extracts from Burke—*sometimes almost divine.*'[1] We may easily imagine how

[1] If this seems hyperbole, let the reader remember an entry in Macaulay's diary:—'I have now finished reading again most of Burke's works. Admirable! The greatest man since Milton.' Trevelyan's *Life*, ii. p. 377.

the heat from that profound and glowing furnace still further inflamed strong purposes and exalted resolution in Mr. Gladstone. The Duke of Argyll wrote to say that he was sorry to hear of the study of Burke: 'Your *perfervidum ingenium Scoti* does not need being touched with a live coal from that Irish altar. Of course your reference to Burke indicates a tendency to compare our position as regards Ireland to the position of George III. towards the colonies. I deny that there is any parallelism or even analogy.' It was during these months that he renewed his friendly intercourse with Cardinal Manning; which had been suspended since the controversy upon the Vatican pamphlets. In November Mr. Gladstone sent Manning his article on the 'Dawn of Creation.' The cardinal thanked him for the paper—'still more for your words, which revive the memories of old days. Fifty-five years are a long reach of life in which to remember each other. We have twice been parted, but as the path declines, as you say, it narrows, and I am glad that we are again nearing each other as we near our end. . . . If we cannot unite in the realm where "the morning stars sang together" we should be indeed afar off.' Much correspondence followed on the articles against Huxley. Then his birthday came:—

Postal deliveries and other arrivals were seven hundred. Immeasurable kindness almost overwhelmed us. There was also the heavy and incessant weight of the Irish question, which offers daily phases more or less new. It was a day for intense thankfulness, but, alas, not for recollection and detachment. When will that day come? Until then, why string together the commonplaces and generalities of great things, really unfelt? . . . I am certain there is one keen and deep desire to be extricated from the life of contention in which a chain of incidents has for the last four years detained me against all my will. Then, indeed, I should reach an eminence from which I could look before and after. But I know truly that I am not worthy of this liberty with which Christ makes free his elect. In his own good time, something, I trust, will for me too be mercifully devised.

III

At the end of this long travail, which anybody else would have found all the sorer for the isolation and quietude that it was ever Mr. Gladstone's fashion in moments of emergency to seek, he reached London on January 11th; two days later he took the oath in the new parliament, whose life was destined to be so short; and then he found himself on the edge of the whirlpool. Three days before formalities were over, and the House assembled for the despatch of business, he received a communication that much perturbed him, and shed an ominous light on the prospect of liberal unity. This communication he described to Lord Granville:—

21 *Carlton House Terrace, Jan.* 18, 1886.—Hartington writes to me

a letter indicating the possibility that on Thursday, while I announce with reasons a policy of silence and reserve, he may feel it his duty to declare his determination 'to maintain the legislative union,' that is to proclaim a policy (so I understand the phrase) of absolute resistance without examination to the demand made by Ireland through five-sixths of her members. This is to play the tory game with a vengeance. They are now, most rashly not to say more, working the Irish question to split the liberal party.

It seems to me that if a gratuitous declaration of this kind is made, it must produce an explosion; and that in a week's time Hartington will have to consider whether he will lead the liberal party himself, or leave it to chaos. He will make my position impossible. When, in conformity with the wishes expressed to me, I changed my plans and became a candidate at the general election, my motives were two. The *first*, a hope that I might be able to contribute towards some pacific settlement of the Irish question. The *second*, a desire to prevent the splitting of the party, of which there appeared to be an immediate danger. The second object has thus far been attained. But it may at any moment be lost, and the most disastrous mode of losing it perhaps would be that now brought into view. It would be certainly opposed to my convictions and determination, to attempt to lead anything like a home rule opposition, and to make this subject—the strife of nations—the dividing line between parties. This being so, I do not see how I could as leader survive a gratuitous declaration of opposition to me such as Hartington appears to meditate. If he still meditates it, ought not the party to be previously informed?

Pray, consider whether you can bring this subject before him, less invidiously than I. I have explained to you and I believe to him, and I believe you approve, my general idea, that we ought not to join issue with the government on what is called home rule (which indeed the social state of Ireland may effectually thrust aside for the time); and that still less ought we to join issue among ourselves, if we have a choice, unless and until we are called upon to consider whether or not to take the government. I for one will have nothing to do with ruining the party if I can avoid it.

This letter discloses with precision the critical state of facts on the eve of action being taken. Issue was not directly joined with ministers on home rule; no choice was found to exist as to taking the government; and this brought deep and long-standing diversities among the liberal leaders to the issue that Mr. Gladstone had strenuously laboured to avoid from the beginning of 1885 to the end.

IV

The Irish paragraphs in the speech from the throne (January 21, 1886) were abstract, hypothetical, and vague. The sovereign was made to say that during the past year there had been no marked increase of serious crime, but there was in many places a concerted resistance to the enforcement of legal obligations, and the practice of intimidation continued to exist. 'If,' the speech went on, 'as my information leads

me to apprehend, the existing provisions of the law should prove to be inadequate to cope with these growing evils, I look with confidence to your willingness to invest my government with all necessary powers.' There was also an abstract paragraph about the legislative union between the two islands.

In a fragment composed in the autumn of 1897, Mr. Gladstone has described the anxiety with which he watched the course of proceedings on the Address :—

I had no means of forming an estimate how far the bulk of the liberal party could be relied on to support a measure of home rule, which should constitute an Irish parliament subject to the supremacy of the parliament at Westminster. I was not sanguine on this head. Even in the month of December, when rumours of my intentions were afloat, I found how little I could reckon on a general support. Under the circumstances I certainly took upon myself a grave responsibility. I attached value to the acts and language of Lord Carnarvon, and the other favourable manifestations. Subsequently we had but too much evidence of a deliberate intention to deceive the Irish, with a view to their support at the election. But in the actual circumstances I thought it my duty to encourage the government of Lord Salisbury to settle the Irish question, so far as I could do this by promises of my personal support. Hence my communication with Mr. Balfour, which has long been in the hands of the public.

It has been unreasonably imputed to me, that the proposal of home rule was a bid for the Irish vote. But my desire for the adjustment of the question by the tories is surely a conclusive answer. The fact is that I could not rely upon the collective support of the liberals ; but I could and did rely upon the support of so many of them as would make the success of the measure certain, in the event of its being proposed by the tory administration. It would have resembled in substance the liberal support given to Roman catholic emancipation in 1829, and the repeal of the corn laws in 1846. Before the meeting of parliament, I had to encounter uncomfortable symptoms among my principal friends, of which I think —— was the organ.

I was, therefore, by no means eager for the dismissal of the tory government, though it counted but 250 supporters out of 670, as long as there were hopes of its taking up the question, or at all events doing nothing to aggravate the situation.

When we came to the debate on the Address I had to face a night of extreme anxiety. The speech from the throne referred in a menacing way to Irish disturbances, and contained a distinct declaration in support of the legislative union. On referring to the clerks at the table to learn in what terms the Address in reply to the speech was couched, I found it was a 'thanking' address, which did not commit the House to an opinion. What I dreaded was lest some one should have gone back to the precedent of 1833, when the Address in reply to the speech was virtually made the vehicle of a solemn declaration in favour of the Act of Union.[1] Home rule, rightly understood, altered

[1] In 1833 the King's Speech represented the state of Ireland in words that might be used at the present time, and expressed confidence that parliament would entrust the King with 'such additional powers as may be necessary for punishing the disturbers of the public peace and for preserving and strengthening the legislative union between the two countries, which with your support and under the blessing of divine Providence

indeed the terms of the Act of Union, but adhered to its principle which was the supremacy of the imperial parliament. Still [it] was pretty certain that any declaration of a substantive character, at the epoch we had now reached, would in its moral effect shut the doors of the existing parliament against home rule.

In a speech of pronounced clearness, Mr. Arthur Elliot endeavoured to obtain a movement in this direction. I thought it would be morally fatal if this tone were extensively adopted on the liberal side ; so I determined on an effort to secure reserve for the time, that our freedom might not be compromised. I, therefore, ventured upon describing myself as an 'old parliamentary hand,' and in that capacity strongly advised the party to keep its own counsel, and await for a little the development of events. Happily this counsel was taken ; had it been otherwise, the early formation of a government favourable to home rule would in all likelihood have become an impossibility. For although our Home Rule bill was eventually supported by more than 300 members, I doubt whether, if the question had been prematurely raised on the night of the Address, as many as 200 would have been disposed to act in that sense.

In the debate on the Address the draft Coercion bill reposing in the secret box was not mentioned. Sir Michael Hicks Beach, the leader of the House, described the mischiefs then afoot, and went on to say that whether they could be dealt with by ordinary law, or would require exceptional powers, were questions that would receive the new chief secretary's immediate attention.[1] Parliament was told that the minister had actually gone to Ireland to make anxious inquiry into these questions. Mr. Smith arrived in Dublin at six o'clock on the morning of January 24, and he quitted it at six o'clock on the evening of the 26th. He was sworn in at the Castle in the forenoon of that day.[2] His views must have reached the cabinet in London not later than the morning of the 26th. Not often can conclusions on such a subject have been ripened with such electrifying precocity.

'I intend to reserve my own freedom of action,' Mr. Gladstone said ; 'there are many who have taken their seats for the first time upon these benches, and I may avail myself of the privilege of old age to offer a recommendation. I would

I am determined to maintain by all the means in my power.' The Address in answer assured his Majesty that his confidence should not be disappointed, and that 'we shall be ready to entrust to H.M. such additional measures, etc., for preserving and strengthening the legislative union which we have determined,' etc. This was the address that Mr. O'Connell denounced as a 'bloody and brutal address,' and he moved as an amendment that the House do resolve itself into a committee of the whole House to consider of an humble address to his Majesty. Feb. 8. Amendment negatived, Ayes being 428, Noes 40.—*Memo.* by Sir T. E. May for Mr. Gladstone, Jan. 18, 1886. O'Connell, that is to say, did not move an amendment in favour of repeal, but proposed the consideration of the Address in committee of the whole House.

1 *Hansard*, 302, p. 128.

2 Lord Carnarvon left Ireland on Jan. 28, and Lord Justices were then appointed. But the lawyers seem to hold that there cannot be Lord Justices without a viceroy, and Lord Carnarvon was therefore technically viceroy out of the kingdom (of Ireland), until Lord Aberdeen was sworn in upon Feb. 10, 1886. He must, accordingly, have signed the minute appointing Mr. Smith chief secretary, though of course Mr. Smith had gone over to reverse the Carnarvon policy.

tell them of my own intention to keep my counsel and reserve my own freedom, until I see the moment and the occasion when there may be a prospect of public benefit in endeavouring to make a movement forward, and I will venture to recommend them, as an old parliamentary hand, to do the same.'[1] Something in this turn of phrase kindled lively irritation, and it drew bitter reproaches from more than one of the younger whigs. The angriest of these remonstrances was listened to from beginning to end without a solitary cheer from the liberal benches. The great bulk of the party took their leader's advice. Of course the reserve of his speech was as significant of Irish concession, as the most open declaration would have been. Yet there was no rebellion. This was felt by ministers to be a decisive omen of the general support likely to be given to Mr. Gladstone's supposed policy by his own party. Mr. Parnell offered some complimentary remarks on the language of Mr. Gladstone, but he made no move in the direction of an amendment. The public outside looked on with stupefaction. For two or three days all seemed to be in suspense. But the two ministerial leaders in the Commons knew how to read the signs. What Sir Michael Hicks Beach and Lord Randolph foresaw, for one thing was an understanding between Mr. Gladstone and the Irishmen, and for another, they foresaw the acquiescence of the mass of the liberals. This twofold discovery cleared the ground for a decision. After the second night's debate ministers saw that the only chance now was to propose coercion. Then it was that the ephemeral chief secretary had started on his voyage for the discovery of something that had already been found.

V

On the afternoon of the 26th, the leader of the House gave notice that two days later the new Irish secretary would ask leave to introduce a bill dealing with the National League, with intimidation, and with the protection of life, property, and public order. This would be followed by a bill dealing with land, pursuing in a more extensive sense the policy of the Ashbourne Act of the year before. The great issue was thus at last brought suddenly and nakedly into view. When the Irish secretary reached Euston Square on the morning of the 27th, he found that his government was out.

The crucial announcement of the 26th of January compelled a prompt determination, and Mr. Gladstone did not shrink. A protest against a return to coercion as the answer of the British parliament to the extraordinary demonstration from Ireland, carried with it the responsibility of office, and this responsibility Mr. Gladstone had resolved to undertake.

The determining event of these transactions,—he says in the fragment

[1] *Hansard*, 302, p. 112.

already cited,—was the declaration of the government that they would propose coercion for Ireland. This declaration put an end to all the hopes and expectations associated with the mission of Lord Carnarvon. Not perhaps in mere logic, but practically, it was now plain that Ireland had no hope from the tories. This being so, my rule of action was changed at once, and I determined on taking any and every legitimate opportunity to remove the existing government from office. Immediately on making up my mind about the rejection of the government, I went to call upon Sir William Harcourt and informed him as to my intentions and the grounds of them. He said 'What! Are you prepared to go forward without either Hartington or Chamberlain?' I answered, 'Yes.' I believe it was in my mind to say, if I did not actually say it, that I was prepared to go forward without anybody. That is to say without any known and positive assurance of support. This was one of the great imperial occasions which call for such resolutions.

An amendment stood upon the notice-paper in the name of Mr. Collings, regretting the omission from the speech of measures for benefiting the rural labourer; and on this motion an immediate engagement was fought. Time was important. An exasperating debate on coercion with obstruction, disorder, suspensions, would have been a damning prologue to any policy of accommodation. The true significance of the motion was not concealed. On the agrarian aspect of it, the only important feature was the adhesion of Mr. Gladstone, now first formally declared, to the policy of Mr. Chamberlain. The author of the agrarian policy fought out once more on the floor of the House against Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen the battle of the platform. It was left for Sir Michael Hicks Beach to remind the House that, whatever the honest mover might mean, the rural labourer had very little to do with the matter, and he implored the gentlemen in front of him to think twice and thrice before they committed the future of this country to the gravest dangers that ever awaited it.

The debate was not prolonged. The discussion opened shortly before dinner, and by one o'clock the division was taken. The government found itself in a minority of 79. The majority numbered 331, composed of 257 liberals and 74 Irish nationalists. The ministerialist minority was 252, made up of 234 tories and 18 liberals. Besides the fact that Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen, and Sir Henry James voted with ministers, there was a still more ominous circumstance. No fewer than 76 liberals were absent, including among them the imposing personality of Mr. Bright. In a memorandum written for submission to the Queen a few days later, Mr. Gladstone said, 'I must express my personal conviction that had the late ministers remained in office and proceeded with their proposed plan of repression, and even had that plan received my support, it would have ended in a disastrous parliamentary failure.'[1]

[1] Mr. Gladstone was often taunted with having got in upon the question of allotments, and then throwing the agricultural labourer overboard. 'The proposition,' he

The next day (Jan. 28) ministers, of course, determined to resign. A liberal member of parliament was overtaken by Lord Randolph on the parade ground, walking away from the cabinet. 'You look a little pensive,' said the liberal. 'Yes; I was thinking. I have plenty to think of. Well, we are out, and you are in.' 'I suppose so,' the liberal replied, 'we are in for six months; we dissolve; you are in for six years.' 'Not at all sure,' said Lord Randolph; 'let me tell you one thing most solemnly and most surely; the conservative party are not going to be made the instrument of the Irish for turning out Mr. Gladstone, if he refuses repeal.' 'Nobody,' observed the sententious liberal, 'should so often as the politician say the prayer not to be led into temptation. Remember your doings last summer.'

said, 'is not only untrue but ridiculous. If true, it would prove that Lord Grey in 1830 came in upon the pension list, and Lord Derby in 1852 on the militia. . . . For myself, I may say personally that I made my public declaration on behalf of allotments in 1832, when Mr. Jesse Collings was just born.'—*To Mr. C. A. Fyffe*, May 6, 1890.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW POLICY

(*1886*)

In reason all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery; but in fact eleven men well armed will certainly subdue one single man in his shirt. . . . Those who have used to cramp liberty have gone so far as to resent even the liberty of complaining; although a man upon the rack was never known to be refused the liberty of roaring as loud as he thought fit.—JONATHAN SWIFT.

THE tory government was defeated in the sitting of Tuesday (Jan. 26). On Friday, 'at a quarter after midnight, in came Sir H. Ponsonby, with verbal commission from her Majesty, which I at once accepted.'[1] The whole of Saturday was spent in consultations with colleagues. On Sunday, Mr. Gladstone records, 'except church, my day from one to eight was given to business. I got only fragmentary reading of the life of the admirable Mr. Suckling and other books. At night came a painful and harassing succession of letters, and my sleep for once gave way; yet for the soul it was profitable, driving me to the hope that the strength of God might be made manifest in my weakness.' On Monday, Feb. 1, he went to attend the Queen. 'Off at 9.10 to Osborne. Two audiences: an hour and half in all. Everything good in the main points. Large discourse upon Ireland in particular. Returned at $7\frac{3}{4}$. I kissed hands and am thereby prime minister for the third time. But, as I trust, for a brief time only. Slept well, *D.G.*'

The first question was, how many of his colleagues in the liberal cabinet that went out of office six months before, would now embark with him in the voyage into stormy and unexplored seas. I should suppose that no such difficulties had ever confronted the attempt at making a cabinet since Canning's in 1827.

Mr. Gladstone begins the fragment from which I have already quoted with a sentence or two of retrospect, and then proceeds:—

[1] *Diary.*

In 1885 (I think) Chamberlain had proposed a plan accepted by Parnell (and supported by me) which, without establishing in Ireland a national parliament, made very considerable advances towards self-government. It was rejected by a small majority of the cabinet—Granville said at the time he would rather take home rule. Spencer thought it would introduce confusion into executive duties.

On the present occasion a full half of the former ministers declined to march with me. Spencer and Granville were my main supports. Chamberlain and Trevelyan went with me, their basis being that we were to seek for some method of dealing with the Irish case other than coercion. What Chamberlain's motive was I do not clearly understand. It was stated that he coveted the Irish secretaryship. . . . To have given him the office would at that time have been held to be a declaration of war against the Irish party.

Selborne nibbled at the offer, but I felt that it would not work, and did not use great efforts to bring him in.[1] . . .

When I had accepted the commission, Ponsonby brought me a message from the Queen that she hoped there would not be any Separation in the cabinet. The word had not at that time acquired the offensive meaning in which it has since been stereotyped by the so-called unionists; and it was easy to frame a reply in general but strong words. I am bound to say that at Osborne in the course of a long conversation, the Queen was frank and free, and showed none of the 'armed neutrality,' which as far as I know has been the best definition of her attitude in the more recent years towards a liberal minister. Upon the whole, when I look back upon 1886, and consider the inveterate sentiment of hostility, flavoured with contempt towards Ireland, which has from time immemorial formed the basis of English tradition, I am much more disposed to be thankful for what we then and afterwards accomplished, than to murmur or to wonder at what we did not.

What Mr. Gladstone called the basis of his new government was set out in a short memorandum, which he read to each of those whom he hoped to include in his cabinet: —'I propose to examine whether it is or is not practicable to comply with the desire widely prevalent in Ireland, and testified by the return of eighty-five out of one hundred and three representatives, for the establishment by statute of a legislative body to sit in Dublin, and to deal with Irish as distinguished from imperial affairs; in such a manner as would be just to each of the three kingdoms, equitable with reference to every class of the people of Ireland, conducive to the social order and harmony of that country, and calculated to support and consolidate the unity of the empire on the continued basis of imperial authority and mutual attachment.'

No definite plan was propounded or foreshadowed, but only the proposition that it was a duty to seek a plan. The cynical version was that a cabinet was got together on the chance of

[1] 'When the matter was finally adjusted by Chamberlain's retirement, we had against us—Derby, Northbrook, Carlingford, Selborne, Dodson, Chamberlain, Hartington, Trevelyan, Bright; and for—Granville, Spencer, Kimberley, Ripon, Rosebery, Harcourt, Childers, Lefevre, Dilke (unavailable).' Mr. Goschen was not in the cabinet of 1880.

being able to agree. To Lord Hartington, Mr. Gladstone applied as soon as he received the Queen's commission. The invitation was declined on reasoned grounds (January 30). Examination and inquiry, said Lord Hartington, must mean a proposal. If no proposal followed inquiry, the reaction of Irish disappointment would be severe, as it would be natural. His adherence, moreover, would be of little value. He had already, he observed, in the government of 1880 made concessions on other subjects that might be thought to have shaken public confidence in him; he could go no further without destroying that confidence altogether. However that might be, he could not depart from the traditions of British statesmen, and he was opposed to a separate Irish legislature. At the same time he concluded, in a sentence afterwards pressed by Mr. Gladstone on the notice of the Queen :—'I am fully convinced that the alternative policy of governing Ireland without large concessions to the national sentiment, presents difficulties of a tremendous character, which in my opinion could now only be faced by the support of a nation united by the consciousness that the fullest opportunity had been given for the production and consideration of a conciliatory policy.'

A few days later (February 5) Lord Hartington wrote :—'I have been told that I have been represented as having been in general agreement with you on your Irish policy, and having been prevented joining your government solely by the declarations which I made to my constituents; and as not intending to oppose the government even on home rule. On looking over my letter I think that the general intention is sufficiently clear, but there is part of one sentence which, taken by itself, might be understood as committing me beyond what I intended or wished. The words I refer to are those in which I say that it may be possible for me as a private member, to prevent obstacles being placed in the way of a fair trial being given to the policy of the new government. But I think that the commencement of the sentence in which these words occur sufficiently reserves my liberty, and that the whole letter shows that what I desire is that the somewhat undefined declarations which have hitherto been made should now assume a practical shape.'[1]

The decision was persistently regarded by Mr. Gladstone as an important event in English political history. With a small number of distinguished individual exceptions, it marked the withdrawal from the liberal party of the aristocratic element. Up to a very recent date this had been its governing element. Until 1868, the whig nobles and their connections held the reins

[1] A few weeks later, Lord Hartington said on the point of Mr. Gladstone's consistency,—'When I look back to the declarations that Mr. Gladstone made in parliament, which have not been infrequent; when I look back to the increased definiteness given to these declarations in his address to the electors of Midlothian and in his Midlothian speeches; when I consider all these things, I feel that I have not, and that no one has, any right to complain of the declaration that Mr. Gladstone has recently made.'—Speech at the Eighty Club, March 5, 1886.

and shaped the policy. After the accession of a leader from outside of the caste in 1868, when Mr. Gladstone for the first time became prime minister, they continued to hold more than their share of the offices, but in cabinet they sank to the position of what is called a moderating force. After 1880 it became every day more clear that even this modest function was slipping away. Lord Hartington found that the moderating force could no longer moderate. If he went on, he must make up his mind to go under the Caudine forks once a week. The significant reference, among his reasons for not joining the new ministry, to the concessions that he had made in the last government for the sake of party unity, and to his feeling that any further moves of the same kind for the same purpose would destroy all public confidence in him, shows just as the circumstances of the election had shown, and as the recent debate on the Collings amendment had shown, how small were the chances, quite apart from Irish policy, of uniting whig and radical wings in any durable liberal government.

Mr. Goschen, who had been a valuable member of the great ministry of 1868, was invited to call, but without hopes that he would rally to a cause so startling; the interview, while courteous and pleasant, was over in a very few minutes. Lord Derby, a man of still more cautious type, and a rather recent addition to the officers of the liberal staff, declined, not without good nature. Lord Northbrook had no faith in a new Irish policy, and his confidence in his late leader had been shaken by Egypt. Most lamented of all the abstentions was the honoured and trusted name of Mr. Bright.

Mr. Trevelyan agreed to join, in the entirely defensible hope that they 'would knock the measure about in the cabinet, as cabinets do,' and mould it into accord with what had until now been the opinion of most of its members.[1] Mr. Chamberlain, who was destined to play so singular and versatile a part in the eventful years to come, entered the cabinet with reluctance and misgiving. The Admiralty was first proposed to him and was declined, partly on the ground that the chief of the fighting and spending departments was not the post for one who had just given to domestic reforms the paramount place in his stirring addresses to the country. Mr. Chamberlain, we may be sure, was not much concerned about the particular office. Whatever its place in the hierarchy, he knew that he could trust himself to make it as important as he pleased, and that his weight in the cabinet and the House would not depend upon the accident of a department. Nobody's position was so difficult. He was well aware how serious a thing it would be for his prospects, if he were to join a confederacy of his arch enemies, the whigs, against Mr. Gladstone, the commanding idol of his friends, the radicals. If, on the other hand, by refusing to enter the govern-

[1] *Hansard*, 804, p. 1106.

ment he should either prevent its formation or should cause its speedy overthrow, he would be left planted with a comparatively ineffective group of his own, and he would incur the deep resentment of the bulk of those with whom he had hitherto been accustomed to act.

All these were legitimate considerations in the mind of a man with the instinct of party management. In the end he joined his former chief. He made no concealment of his position. He warned the prime minister that he did not believe it to be possible to reconcile conditions as to the security of the empire and the supremacy of parliament, with the establishment of a legislative body in Dublin. He declared his own preference for an attempt to come to terms with the Irish members on the basis of a more limited scheme of local government, coupled with proposals about land and about education. At the same time, as the minister had been good enough to leave him unlimited liberty of judgment and rejection, he was ready to give unprejudiced examination to more extensive proposals.[1] Such was Mr. Chamberlain's excuse for joining. It is hardly so intelligible as Lord Hartington's reasons for not joining. For the new government could only subsist by Irish support. That support notoriously depended on the concession of more than a limited scheme of local government. The administration would have been overthrown in a week, and to form a cabinet on such a basis as was here proposed would be the idlest experiment that ever was tried.

The appointment of the writer of these pages to be Irish secretary was at once generally regarded as decisive of Mr. Gladstone's ultimate intention, for during the election and afterwards I had spoken strongly in favour of a colonial type of government for Ireland. It was rightly pressed upon Mr. Gladstone by at least one of his most experienced advisers, that such an appointment to this particular office would be construed as a declaration in favour of an Irish parliament, without any further examination at all.[2] And so, in fact, it was generally construed.

Nobody was more active in aiding the formation of the new

[1] January 30, 1886. *Hansard*, 304, p. 1185.

[2] As for the story of my being concerned in Mr. Gladstone's conversion to home rule, it is, of course, pure moonshine. I only glance at it because in politics people are ready to believe anything. At the general election of 1880, I had declined to support home rule. In the press, however, I had strenuously opposed the Forster Coercion bill of the following winter, as involving a radical misapprehension of the nature and magnitude of the case. In the course of that controversy, arguments pressed themselves forward which led much further than mere resistance to the policy of coercion. Without having had the advantage of any communication whatever with Mr. Gladstone upon Irish subjects for some years before, I had still pointed out to my constituents at Newcastle in the previous November, that there was nothing in Mr. Gladstone's electoral manifesto to prevent him from proposing a colonial plan for Ireland, and I had expressed my own conviction that this was the right direction in which to look. A few days before the fall of the tory government, I had advocated the exclusion of Irish members from Westminster, and the production of measures dealing with the land.—Speech at Chelmsford, January 7, 1886.

ministry than Sir William Harcourt, in whose powerful composition loyalty to party and conviction of the value of party have ever been indestructible instincts. 'I must not let the week absolutely close,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to him from Mentmore (February 6), 'without emphatically thanking you for the indefatigable and effective help which you have rendered to me during its course, in the difficult work now nearly accomplished.'

At the close of the operation, he writes from Downing Street to his son Henry, then in India :—

February 12, 1886.—You see the old date has reappeared at the head of my letter. The work last week was extremely hard from the mixture of political discussions on the Irish question, by way of preliminary condition, with the ordinary distribution of offices which while it lasts is of itself difficult enough.

Upon the whole I am well satisfied with its composition. It is not a bit more radical than the government of last year ; perhaps a little less. And we have got some good young hands, which please me very much. Yet short as the Salisbury government has been, it would not at all surprise me if this were to be shorter still, such are the difficulties that bristle round the Irish question. But the great thing is to be right ; and as far as matters have yet advanced, I see no reason to be apprehensive in this capital respect. I have framed a plan for the land and for the finance of what must be a very large transaction. It is necessary to see our way a little on these at the outset, for, unless these portions of anything we attempt are sound and well constructed, we cannot hope to succeed. On the other hand, if we fail, as I believe the late ministers would have failed even to pass their plan of repressive legislation, the consequences will be deplorable in every way. There seems to be no doubt that some, and notably Lord R. Churchill, fully reckoned on my failing to form a government.[1]

II

The work pressed, and time was terribly short. The new ministers had barely gone through their re-elections before the opposition began to harry them for their policy, and went so far, before the government was five weeks old, as to make the

[1] The cabinet was finally composed as follows :—

Mr. Gladstone	*First lord of the treasury.*
Lord Herschell	*Lord chancellor.*
Lord Spencer	*President of council.*
Sir W. Harcourt	*Chancellor of exchequer.*
Mr. Childers	*Home secretary.*
Lord Rosebery	*Foreign* ,,
Lord Granville	*Colonial* ,,
Lord Kimberley	*Indian* ,,
Mr. Campbell-Bannerman	*War* ,,
Lord Ripon	*Admiralty.*
Mr. Chamberlain	*Local government.*
Mr. Morley	*Irish secretary.*
Mr. Trevelyan	*Scotch secretary.*
Mr. Mundella	*Board of trade.*

The Lord chancellor, Mr. C.-Bannerman, Mr. Mundella, and myself, now sat in cabinet for the first time. After the two resignations at the end of March, Mr. Stansfeld came in as head of the Local government board, and we sat with the ominous number of thirteen at table.

extreme motion for refusing supply. Even if the opposition had been in more modest humour, no considerable delay could be defended. Social order in Ireland was in a profoundly unsatisfactory phase. That fact was the starting-point of the reversal of policy which the government had come into existence to carry out. You cannot announce a grand revolution, and then beg the world to wait. The very reason that justified the policy commanded expedition. Anxiety and excitement were too intense out of doors for anything but a speedy date, and it was quite certain that if the new plan were not at once propounded, no other public business would have much chance.

The new administration did not meet parliament until after the middle of February, and the two Irish bills, in which their policy was contained, were ready by the end of the first week of April. Considering the enormous breadth and intricacy of the subjects, the pressure of parliamentary business all the time, the exigencies of administrative work in the case of at least one of the ministers principally concerned, and the distracting atmosphere of party perturbation and disquiet that daily and hourly harassed the work, the despatch of such a task within such limits of time was at least not discreditable to the industry and concentration of those who achieved it. I leave it still open to the hostile critic to say, as Molière's Alceste says of the sonnet composed in a quarter of an hour, that time has nothing to do with the business.

All through March Mr. Gladstone laboured in what he called 'stiff conclaves' about finance and land, attended drawing rooms, and 'observed the variations of H.M.'s *accueils*'; had an audience of the Queen, 'very gracious, but avoided serious subjects'; was laid up with cold, and the weather made Sir Andrew Clark strict; then rose up to fresh grapples with finance and land and untoward colleagues, and all the 'inexorable demands of my political vocation.' His patience and self-control were as marvellous as his tireless industry. Sorely tried by something or another at a cabinet, he enters,—'Angry with myself for not bearing it better. I ought to have been thankful for it all the time.' On a similar occasion, a junior colleague showed himself less thankful than he should have been for purposeless antagonism. 'Think of it as discipline,' said Mr. Gladstone. 'But why,' said the unregenerate junior, 'should we grudge the blessings of discipline to some other people?'

Mr. Gladstone was often blamed even by Laodiceans among his supporters, not wise but foolish after the event, because he did not proceed by way of resolution, instead of by bill. Resolutions, it was argued, would have smoothed the way. General propositions would have found readier access to men's minds. Having accepted the general proposition, people would

have found it harder to resist the particular application. Devices that startled in the precision of a clause, would in the vagueness of a broad and abstract principle have soothed and persuaded. Mr. Gladstone was perfectly alive to all this, but his answer to it was plain. Those who eventually threw out the bill would insist on unmasking the resolution. They would have exhausted all the stereotyped vituperation of abstract motions. They would have ridiculed any general proposition as mere platitude, and pertinaciously clamoured for working details. What would the resolution have affirmed? The expediency of setting up a legislative authority in Ireland to deal with exclusively Irish affairs. But such a resolution would be consistent equally with a narrow scheme on the one hand, such as a plan for national councils, and a broad scheme on the other, giving to Ireland a separate exchequer, separate control over customs and excise, and practically an independent and co-ordinate legislature.[1] How could the government meet the challenge to say outright whether they intended broad or narrow? Such a resolution could hardly have outlived an evening's debate, and would not have postponed the evil day of schism for a single week.

Precedents lent no support. It is true that the way was prepared for the Act of Union in the parliament of Great Britain, by the string of resolutions moved by Mr. Pitt in the beginning of 1799. But anybody who glances at them, will at once perceive that if resolutions on their model had been framed for the occasion of 1886, they would have covered the whole ground of the actual bill, and would instantly have raised all the formidable objections and difficulties exactly as the bill itself raised them. The Bank Charter Act of 1833 was founded on eight resolutions, and they also set forth in detail the points of the ministerial plan.[2] The renewal of the East India Company's charter in the same year went on by way of resolutions, less abundant in particulars than the Bank Act, but preceded by correspondence and papers which had been exhaustively canvassed and discussed.[3] The question of Irish autonomy was in no position of that sort.

The most apt precedent in some respects is to be found on a glorious occasion, also in the year 1833. Mr. Stanley introduced the proposals of his government for the emancipation of the West Indian slaves in five resolutions. They furnished a key not only to policy and general principles, but also to the plan by which these were to be carried out.[4] Lord Howick followed the minister at once, raising directly the whole question of the plan. Who could doubt that Lord Hartington would now take precisely the same course towards Irish resolutions of similar

[1] See Mr. Chamberlain's speech, June 1, 1886. *Hansard*, 306, p. 677. Also Lord Hartington at Bradford, May 18, 1886.

[2] June 1, 1833. *Hansard*, 18, p. 186.

[3] June 13, 1833. *Ibid.* p. 700.

[4] May 14, 1833. *Ibid.* 17, p. 1230.

scope? The procedure on the India bill of 1858 was just as little to the point. The general disposition of the House was wholly friendly to a settlement of the question of Indian government by the existing ministry. No single section of the opposition wished to take it out of their hands, for neither Lord Russell nor the Peelites nor the Manchester men, and probably not even Lord Palmerston himself, were anxious for the immediate return of the last named minister to power. Who will pretend that in the House of Commons in February 1886, anything at all like the same state of facts prevailed? As for the resolutions in the case of the Irish church, they were moved by Mr. Gladstone in opposition, and he thought it obvious that a policy proposed in opposition stands on a totally different footing from a policy laid before parliament on the responsibility of a government, and a government bound by every necessity of the situation to prompt action.[1]

At a later stage, as we shall see, it was actually proposed that a vote for the second reading of the bill should be taken to mean no more than a vote for its principle. Every one of the objections that instantly sprang out of their ambush against this proposal would have worked just as much mischief against an initial resolution. In short, in opening a policy of this difficulty and extent, the cabinet was bound to produce to parliament not merely its policy but its plan for carrying the policy out. By that course only could parliament know what it was doing. Any other course must have ended in a mystifying, irritating, and barren confusion, alike in the House of Commons and in the country.[2]

The same consideration that made procedure by resolution unadvisable told with equal force within the cabinet. Examination into the feasibility of some sort of plan was most rapidly brought to a head by the test of a particular plan. It is a mere fable of faction that a cast iron policy was arbitrarily imposed upon the cabinet; as matter of fact, the plan originally propounded did undergo large and radical modifications.

The policy as a whole shaped itself in two measures. First, a scheme for creating a legislative body, and defining its powers; second, a scheme for opening the way to a settlement of the land question, in discharge of an obligation of honour and policy, imposed upon this country by its active share in all the mischiefs that the Irish land system had produced. The introduction of a plan for dealing with the land was not very popular even among ministers, but it was pressed by Lord

[1] There is also the case of the Reform bill of 1867. Disraeli laid thirteen resolutions on the table. Lowe and Bright both agreed in urging that the resolutions should be dropped and the bill at once printed. A meeting of liberal members at Mr. Gladstone's house unanimously resolved to support an amendment setting aside the resolutions. Disraeli at once abandoned them.

[2] Lord Hartington's argument on the second reading shows how a resolution would have fared. *Hansard*, 305, p. 610.

Spencer and the Irish secretary, on the double ground that the land was too burning a question to be left where it then stood, and next that it was unfair to a new and untried legislature in Ireland to find itself confronted by such a question on the very threshold.

The plan was opened by Mr. Gladstone in cabinet on March 13th, and Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan at once wished to resign. He remonstrated in a vigorous correspondence. 'I have seen many and many a resignation,' he said, 'but never one based upon the intentions, nay the immature intentions of the prime minister, and on a pure intuition of what may happen. Bricks and rafters are prepared for a house, but are not themselves a house.' The evil hour was postponed, but not for long. The cabinet met again a few days later (March 26) and things came to a sharp issue. The question was raised in a sufficiently definite form by the proposition from the prime minister for the establishment of a statutory body sitting in Dublin with legislative powers. No difficulty was made about the bare proposition itself. Every one seemed to go as far as that. It needed to be tested, and tests were at once forthcoming. Mr. Trevelyan could not assent to the control of the immediate machinery of law and order being withdrawn from direct British authority, among other reasons because it was this proposal that created the necessity for buying out the Irish landlords, which he regarded as raising a problem absolutely insoluble.[1] Mr. Chamberlain raised four points. He objected to the cesser of Irish representation; he could not consent to the grant of full rights of taxation to Ireland; he resisted the surrender of the appointment of judges and magistrates; and he argued strongly against proceeding by enumeration of the things that an Irish government might not do, instead of by a specific delegation of the things that it might do.[2] That these four objections were not in themselves incapable of accommodation was shown by subsequent events. The second was very speedily, and the first was ultimately allowed, while the fourth was held by good authority to be little more than a question of drafting. Even the third was not a point either way on which to break up a government, destroy a policy, and split a party. But everybody who is acquainted with either the great or the small conflicts of human history, knows how little the mere terms of a principle or of an objection are to be trusted as a clue either to its practical significance, or to the design with which it is in reality advanced. The design here under all the four heads of objection, was the dwarfing of the legislative body, the cramping and constriction of its organs, its reduction to something which the Irish could not have even pretended to accept, and which they would have been no better than fools if they had ever attempted to work.

[1] *Hansard*, 304, p. 1116. [2] *Hansard*, 304, p. 1190.

Some supposed then, and Mr. Chamberlain has said since, that when he entered the cabinet room on this memorable occasion, he intended to be conciliatory. Witnesses of the scene thought that the prime minister made little attempt in that direction. Yet where two men of clear mind and firm will mean two essentially different things under the same name, whether autonomy or anything else, and each intends to stand by his own interpretation, it is childish to suppose that arts of deportment will smother or attenuate fundamental divergence, or make people who are quite aware how vitally they differ, pretend that they entirely agree. Mr. Gladstone knew the giant burden that he had taken up, and when he went to the cabinet of March 26, his mind was no doubt fixed that success, so hazardous at best, would be hopeless in face of personal antagonisms and bitterly divided counsels. This, in his view, and in his own phrase, was one of the 'great imperial occasions' that call for imperial resolves. The two ministers accordingly resigned.

Besides these two important secessions, some ministers out of the cabinet resigned, but they were of the whig complexion.[1] The new prospect of the whig schism extending into the camp of the extreme radicals created natural alarm but hardly produced a panic. So deep were the roots of party, so immense the authority of a veteran leader. It used to be said of the administration of 1880, that the world would never really know Mr. Gladstone's strength in parliament and the country, until every one of his colleagues had in turn abandoned him to his own resources. Certainly the secessions of the end of March 1886 left him undaunted. Every consideration of duty and of policy bound him to persevere. He felt, justly enough, that a minister who had once deliberately invited his party and the people of the three kingdoms to follow him on so arduous and bold a march as this, had no right on any common plea to turn back until he had exhausted every available device to 'bring the army of the faithful through.'

III

From the first the Irish leader was in free and constant communication with the chief secretary. Proposals were once or twice made, not I think at Mr. Parnell's desire, for conversations to be held between Mr. Gladstone and himself, but they were always discouraged by Mr. Gladstone, who was never fond of direct personal contentions, or conversations when the purpose could be as well served otherwise, and he had a horror of what he called multiplying channels of communication. 'For the

[1] Faint hopes were nourished that Mr. Bright might be induced to join, but there was unfortunately no ground for them. Mr. Whitbread was invited, but preferred to lend staunch and important support outside. Lord Dalhousie, one of the truest hearts that ever were attracted to public life, too early lost to his country, took the Scottish secretaryship, not in the cabinet.

moment,' he replied, 'I think we may look to Mr. M. alone, and rely on all he says for accuracy as well as fidelity. I have been hard at work, and to-day I mean to have a further and full talk with Mr. M., who will probably soon after wish for some renewed conversation with Mr. Parnell.' Mr. Parnell showed himself acute, frank, patient, closely attentive, and possessed of striking though not rapid insight. He never slurred over difficulties, nor tried to pretend that rough was smooth. On the other hand, he had nothing in common with that desperate species of counsellor, who takes all the small points, and raises objections instead of helping to contrive expedients. He measured the ground with a slow and careful eye, and fixed tenaciously on the thing that was essential at the moment. Of constructive faculty he never showed a trace. He was a man of temperament, of will, of authority, of power; not of ideas or ideals, or knowledge, or political maxims, or even of the practical reason in any of its higher senses, as Hamilton, Madison, and Jefferson had practical reason. But he knew what he wanted.

He was always perfectly ready at this period to acquiesce in Irish exclusion from Westminster, on the ground that they would want all the brains they had for their own parliament. At the same time he would have liked a provision for sending a delegation to Westminster on occasion, with reference to some definite Irish questions such as might be expected to arise. As to the composition of the upper or protective order in the Irish Parliament, he was wholly unfamiliar with the various utopian plans that have been advanced for the protection of minorities, and he declared himself tolerably indifferent whether the object should be sought in nomination by the crown, or through a special and narrower elective body, or by any other scheme. To such things he had given no thought. He was a party chief, not a maker of constitutions. He liked the idea of both orders sitting in one House. He made one significant suggestion: he wished the bill to impose the same disqualification upon the clergy as exists in our own parliament. But he would have liked to see certain ecclesiastical dignitaries included by virtue of their office in the upper or protective branch. All questions of this kind, however, interested him much less than finance. Into financial issues he threw himself with extraordinary energy, and he fought for better terms with a keenness and tenacity that almost baffled the mighty expert with whom he was matched. They only met once during the weeks of the preparation of the bill, though the indirect communication was constant. Here is my scanty note of the meeting:—

April 5.—Mr. Parnell came to my room at the House at 8.30, and we talked for two hours. At 10.30 I went to Mr. Gladstone next door, and told him how things stood. He asked me to open the points of discussion, and into my room we went. He shook hands cordially with Mr. Parnell,

and sat down between him and me. We at once got to work. P. extraordinarily close, tenacious, and sharp. It was all finance. At midnight, Mr. Gladstone rose in his chair and said, 'I fear I must go; I cannot sit as late as I used to do.' 'Very clever, very clever,' he muttered to me as I held open the door of his room for him. I returned to Parnell, who went on repeating his points in his impenetrable way, until the policeman mercifully came to say the House was up.

Mr. Gladstone's own note must also be transcribed :—

April 5.—Wrote to Lord Spencer. The Queen and ministers. Four hours on the matter for my speech. 1½ hours with Welby and Hamilton on the figures. Saw Lord Spencer, Mr. Morley, Mr. A. M. H. of C., 5-8. Dined at Sir Thomas May's.

1½ hours with Morley and Parnell on the root of the matter; rather too late for me, 10½-12. A hard day. (*Diary.*)

On more than one financial point the conflict went perilously near to breaking down the whole operation. 'If we do not get a right budget,' said Mr. Parnell, 'all will go wrong from the very first hour.' To the last he held out that the just proportion of Irish contribution to the imperial fund was not one-fourteenth or one-fifteenth, but a twentieth or twenty-first part. He insisted all the more strongly on his own more liberal fraction, as a partial compensation for their surrender of fiscal liberty and the right to impose customs duties. Even an hour or two before the bill was actually to be unfolded to the House, he hurried to the Irish office in what was for him rather an excited state, to make one more appeal to me for his fraction. It is not at all improbable that if the bill had gone forward into committee, it would have been at the eleventh hour rejected by the Irish on this department of it, and then all would have been at an end. Mr. Parnell never concealed this danger ahead.

In the cabinet things went forward with such ups and downs as are usual when a difficult bill is on the anvil. In a project of this magnitude, it was inevitable that some minister should occasionally let fall the consecrated formula, that if this or that were done or not done, he must reconsider his position. Financial arrangements, and the protection of the minority, were two of the knottiest points,—the first from the contention raised on the Irish side, the second from misgiving in some minds as to the possibility of satisfying protestant sentiment in England and Scotland. Some kept the colonial type more strongly in view than others, and the bill no doubt ultimately bore that cast.

The draft project of surrendering complete taxing-power to the Irish legislative body was eventually abandoned. It was soon felt that the bare possibility of Ireland putting duties on British goods—and it was not more than a bare possibility in view of Britain's position as practically Ireland's only market—would have destroyed the bill in every manufacturing and com-

mercial centre in the land. Mr. Parnell agreed to give up the control of customs, and also to give up direct and continuous representation at Westminster. On this cardinal point of the cesser of Irish representation, Mr. Gladstone to the last professed to keep an open mind, though to most of the cabinet, including especially three of its oldest hands and coolest heads, exclusion was at this time almost vital. Exclusion was favoured not only on its merits. Mr. Bright was known to regard it as large compensation for what otherwise he viewed as pure mischief, and it was expected to win support in other quarters generally hostile. So in truth it did, but at the cost of support in quarters that were friendly. On April 30, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville, 'I scarcely see how a cabinet could have been formed, if the inclusion of the Irish members had been insisted on ; and now I do not see how the scheme and policy can be saved from shipwreck, if the exclusion is insisted on.'

The plan was bound to be extensive, as its objects were extensive, and it took for granted in the case of Ireland the fundamental probabilities of civil society. He who looks with 'indolent and kingly gaze' upon all projects of written constitutions need not turn to the Appendix unless he will. Two features of the plan were cardinal.

The foundation of the scheme was the establishment in Ireland of a domestic legislature to deal with Irish as distinguished from imperial affairs. It followed from this that if Irish members and representative peers remained at Westminster at all, though they might claim a share in the settlement of imperial affairs, they could not rightly control English or Scotch affairs. This was from the first, and has ever since remained, the Gordian knot. The cabinet on a review of all the courses open determined to propose the plan of total exclusion, save and unless for the purpose of revising this organic statute.

The next question was neither so hard nor so vital. Ought the powers of the Irish legislature to be specifically enumerated? Or was it better to enumerate the branches of legislation from which the statutory parliament was to be shut out? Should we enact the things that they might do, or the things that they might not do, leaving them the whole residue of law-making power outside of these exceptions and exclusions? The latter was the plan adopted in the bill. Disabilities were specified, and everything not so specified was left within the scope of the Irish authority. These disabilities comprehended all matters affecting the crown. All questions of defence and armed force were shut out ; all foreign and colonial relations ; the law of trade and navigation, of coinage and legal tender. The new legislature could not meddle with certain charters, nor with certain contracts, nor could it establish or endow any particular religion.[1]

[1] See Appendix.

IV

Among his five spurious types of courage, Aristotle names for one the man who seems to be brave, only because he does not see his danger. This, at least, was not Mr. Gladstone's case. No one knew better than the leader in the enterprise, how formidable were the difficulties that lay in his path. The giant mass of secular English prejudice against Ireland frowned like a mountain chain across the track. A strong and proud nation had trained itself for long courses of time in habits of dislike for the history, the political claims, the religion, the temperament, of a weaker nation. The violence of the Irish members in the last parliament, sporadic barbarities in some of the wilder portions of the island, the hideous murders in the Park, had all deepened and vivified the scowling impressions nursed by large bodies of Englishmen for many ages past about unfortunate Ireland. Then the practical operation of shaping an Irish constitution, whether on colonial, federal, or any other lines, was in itself a task that, even if all external circumstance had been as smiling as it was in fact the opposite, still abounded in every kind of knotty, intricate, and intractable matter.

It is true that elements could be discovered on the other side. First, was Mr. Gladstone's own high place in the confidence of great masses of his countrymen, the result of a lifetime of conspicuous service and achievement. Next, the lacerating struggle with Ireland ever since 1880, and the confusion into which it had brought our affairs, had bred something like despair in many minds, and they were ready to look in almost any direction for relief from an intolerable burden. Third, the controversy had not gone very far before opponents were astounded to find that the new policy, which they angrily scouted as half insanity and half treason, gave comparatively little shock to the new democracy. This was at first imputed to mere ignorance and raw habits of political judgment. Wider reflection might have warned them that the plain people of this island, though quickly roused against even the shadow of concession when the power or the greatness of their country is openly assailed, seem at the same time ready to turn to moral claims of fair play, of conciliation, of pacific truce. With all these magnanimous sentiments the Irish case was only too easily made to associate itself. The results of the Irish elections and the force of the constitutional demand sank deep in the popular mind. The grim spectre of Coercion as the other alternative wore its most repulsive look in the eyes of men, themselves but newly admitted to full citizenship. Rash experiment in politics has been defined as raising grave issues without grave cause. Nobody of any party denied in this crisis the gravity of the cause.

CHAPTER VI

INTRODUCTION OF THE BILL

(*1886*)

> Much have I seen and known; cities of men
> And manners, climates, councils, governments,
> Myself not least, but honour'd of them all . . .
> There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;
> There gloom the dark broad seas.
>
> TENNYSON, *Ulysses*.

IT was not within the compass either of human effort or human endurance even for the most practised and skilful of orators to unfold the whole plan, both government and land, in a single speech. Nor was public interest at all equally divided. Irish land had devoured an immense amount of parliamentary time in late years; it is one of the most technical and repulsive of all political subjects; and to many of the warmest friends of Irish self-government, any special consideration for the owners of Irish land was bitterly unpalatable. Expectation was centred upon the plan for general government. This was introduced on April 8. Here is the entry in the little diary :—

The message came to me this morning: 'Hold thou up my goings in thy path, that my footsteps slip not.' Settled finally my figures with Welby and Hamilton; other points with Spencer and Morley. Reflected much. Took a short drive. H. of C., 4½-8¼. Extraordinary scenes outside the House and in. My speech, which I have sometimes thought could never end, lasted nearly 3½ hours. Voice and strength and freedom were granted to me in a degree beyond what I could have hoped. But many a prayer had gone up for me, and not I believe in vain.

No such scene has ever been beheld in the House of Commons. Members came down at break of day to secure their places; before noon every seat was marked, and crowded benches were even arrayed on the floor of the House from the mace to the bar. Princes, ambassadors, great peers, high prelates, thronged the lobbies. The fame of the orator, the boldness of his exploit, curiosity as to the plan, poignant anxiety as to the party result, wonder whether a wizard had at last actually arisen with a spell for casting out the baleful spirits that had for so many

ages made Ireland our torment and our dishonour, all these things brought together such an assemblage as no minister before had ever addressed within those world-renowned walls. The parliament was new. Many of its members had fought a hard battle for their seats, and trusted they were safe in the haven for half a dozen good years to come. Those who were moved by professional ambition, those whose object was social advancement, those who thought only of upright public service, the keen party men, the men who aspired to office, the men with a past and the men who looked for a future, all alike found themselves adrift on dark and troubled waters. The secrets of the bill had been well kept. To-day the disquieted host were first to learn what was the great project to which they would have to say that Aye or No on which for them and for the state so much would hang.

Of the chief comrades or rivals of the minister's own generation, the strong administrators, the eager and accomplished debaters, the sagacious leaders, the only survivor now comparable to him in eloquence or in influence was Mr. Bright. That illustrious man seldom came into the House in those distracted days; and on this memorable occasion his stern and noble head was to be seen in dim obscurity. Various as were the emotions in other regions of the House, in one quarter rejoicing was unmixed. There, at least, was no doubt and no misgiving. There pallid and tranquil sat the Irish leader, whose hard insight, whose patience, energy, and spirit of command had achieved this astounding result, and done that which he had vowed to his countrymen that he would assuredly be able to do. On the benches round him, genial excitement rose almost to tumult. Well it might. For the first time since the union, the Irish case was at last to be pressed in all its force and strength, in every aspect of policy and of conscience, by the most powerful Englishman then alive.

More striking than the audience, was the man; more striking than the multitude of eager onlookers from the shore was the rescuer with deliberate valour facing the floods ready to wash him down; the veteran Ulysses, who after more than half a century of combat, service, toil, thought it not too late to try a further 'work of noble note.' In the hands of such a master of the instrument, the theme might easily have lent itself to one of those displays of exalted passion which the House had marvelled at in more than one of Mr. Gladstone's speeches on the Turkish question, or heard with religious reverence in his speech on the Affirmation bill in 1883. What the occasion now required was that passion should burn low, and reasoned persuasion hold up the guiding lamp. An elaborate scheme was to be unfolded, an unfamiliar policy to be explained and vindicated. Of that best kind of eloquence which dispenses with declamation, this was a fine and sustained example. There

was a deep, rapid, steady, onflowing volume of argument, exposition, exhortation. Every hard or bitter stroke was avoided. Now and again a fervid note thrilled the ear and lifted all hearts. But political oratory is action, not words,—action, character, will, conviction, purpose, personality. As this eager muster of men underwent the enchantment of periods exquisite in their balance and modulation, the compulsion of his flashing glance and animated gesture, what stirred and commanded them was the recollection of national service, the thought of the speaker's mastering purpose, his unflagging resolution and strenuous will, his strength of thew and sinew well tried in long years of resounding war, his unquenched conviction that the just cause can never fail. Few are the heroic moments in our parliamentary politics, but this was one.

II

The first reading of the bill was allowed to pass without a division. To the second, Lord Hartington moved an amendment in the ordinary form of simple rejection.[1] His two speeches[2] present the case against the policy and the bill in its most massive form. The direct and unsophisticated nature of his antagonism, backed by a personal character of uprightness and plain dealing beyond all suspicion, gave a momentum to his attack that was beyond any effect of dialectics. It was noticed that he had never during his thirty years of parliamentary life spoken with anything like the same power before. The debates on the two stages occupied sixteen nights. They were not unworthy of the gravity of the issue, nor of the fame of the House of Commons. Only one speaker held the magic secret of Demosthenic oratory. Several others showed themselves masters of the higher arts of parliamentary discussion. One or two transient spurts of fire in the encounters of orange and green, served to reveal the intensity of the glow behind the closed doors of the furnace. But the general temper was good. The rule against irritating language was hardly ever broken. Swords crossed according to the strict rules of combat. The tone was rational and argumentative. There was plenty of strong, close, and acute reasoning; there was some learning, a considerable acquaintance both with historic and contemporary, foreign and domestic fact, and when fact and reasoning broke down, their place was abundantly filled by eloquent prophecy of disaster on one side, or blessing on the other. Neither prophecy was demonstrable; both could be made plausible.

Discussion was adorned by copious references to the mighty shades who had been the glory of the House in a great parliamentary age. We heard again the Virgilian hexameters in

[1] First reading, April 13. Motion made for second reading and amendment, May 10. Land bill introduced and first reading, April 16.

[2] April 9, May 10.

which Pitt had described the spirit of his policy at the union :—

Paribus se legibus ambæ
Invictæ gentes æterna in fœdera mittant.

We heard once more how Grattan said that union of the legislatures was severance of the nations; that the ocean forbade union, the channel forbade separation; that England in her government of Ireland had gone to hell for her principles and to bedlam for her discretion. There was, above all, a grand and copious anthology throughout the debate from Burke, the greatest of Irishmen and the largest master of civil wisdom in our tongue.

The appearance of a certain measure of the common form of all debates was inevitable. No bill is ever brought in of which its opponents do not say that it either goes too far, or else it does not go far enough; no bill of which its defenders do not say as to some crucial flaw pounced upon and paraded by the enemy, that after all it is a mere question of drafting, or can be more appropriately discussed in committee. There was the usual evasion of the strong points of the adversary's case, the usual exaggeration of its weak ones. That is debating. Perorations ran in a monotonous mould; integrity of the empire on one side, a real, happy, and indissoluble reconciliation between English and Irish on the other.

One side dwelt much on the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam in 1795, and the squalid corruption of the union; the other, on the hopeless distraction left by the rebellion of 1798, and the impotent confusion of the Irish Parliament. One speaker enumerated Mr. Pitt's arguments for the union—the argument about the regency and about the commercial treaty, the argument about foreign alliances and confederacies and the army, about free trade and catholic emancipation; he showed that under all these six heads the new bill carefully respected and guarded the grounds taken by the minister of the union. He was bluntly answered by the exclamation that nobody cared a straw about what Mr. Pitt said, or what Sir Ralph Abercromby said; what we had to deal with were the facts of the case in the year 1886. You show your mistrust of the Irish by inserting all these safeguards in the bill, said the opposition. No, replied ministers; the safeguards are to meet no mistrusts of ours, but those entertained or feigned by other people. You had no mandate for home rule, said the opposition. Still less, ministers retorted, had you a mandate for coercion.

Such a scheme as this, exclaimed the critics, with all its checks and counterchecks, its truncated functions, its vetoes, exceptions, and reservations, is degrading to Ireland, and every Irish patriot with a spark of spirit in his bosom must feel it so. As if, retorted the defenders, there were no degradation to a free people in suffering twenty years of your firm and resolute

coercion. One side argued that the interests of Ireland and Great Britain were much too closely intertwined to permit a double legislature. The other argued that this very interdependence was just what made an Irish legislature safe, because it was incredible that they should act as if they had no benefit to receive from us, and no injury to suffer from injury inflicted upon us. Do you, asked some, blot out of your minds the bitter, incendiary, and rebellious speech of Irish members? But do you then, the rejoinder followed, suppose that the language that came from men's hearts when a boon was refused, is a clue to the sentiment in their hearts when the boon shall have been granted? Ministers were bombarded with reproachful quotations from their old speeches. They answered the fire by taunts about the dropping of coercion, and the amazing manœuvres of the autumn of 1885. The device of the two orders was denounced as inconsistent with the democratic tendencies of the age. A very impressive argument forsooth from you, was the reply, who are either stout defenders of the House of Lords as it is, or else stout advocates for some of the multifarious schemes for mixing hereditary peers with fossil officials, all of them equally alien to the democratic tendencies whether of this age or any other. So, with stroke and counter-stroke, was the ball kept flying.

Much was made of foreign and colonial analogies; of the union between Austria and Hungary, Norway and Sweden, Denmark and Iceland; how in forcing legislative union on North America we lost the colonies; how the union of legislatures ended in the severance of Holland from Belgium. All this carried little conviction. Most members of parliament like to think with pretty large blinkers on, and though it may make for narrowness, this is consistent with much practical wisdom. Historical parallels in the actual politics of the day are usually rather decorative than substantial.

If people disbelieve premisses, nothing can be easier than to ridicule conclusions; and what happened now was that critics argued against this or that contrivance in the machinery, because they insisted that no machinery was needed at all, and that no contrivance could ever be made to work, because the Irish mechanicians would infallibly devote all their infatuated energy and perverse skill, not to work it, but to break it in pieces. The Irish, in Mr. Gladstone's ironical paraphrase of these singular opinions, had a double dose of original sin; they belonged wholly to the kingdoms of darkness, and therefore the rules of that probability which wise men have made the guide of life can have no bearing in any case of theirs. A more serious way of stating the fundamental objection with which Mr. Gladstone had to deal was this. Popular government is at the best difficult to work. It is supremely difficult to work in a statutory scheme with limits, reservations, and restrictions

lurking round every corner. Finally, owing to history and circumstance, no people in all the world is less fitted to try a supremely difficult experiment in government than the people who live in Ireland. Your superstructure, they said, is enormously heavy, yet you are going to raise it on foundations that are a quaking bog of incapacity and discontent. This may have been a good answer to the policy of the bill. But to criticise its provisions from such a point of view was as inevitably unfruitful as it would be to set a hardened agnostic to revise the Thirty-nine articles or the mystic theses of the Athanasian creed.

On the first reading, Mr. Chamberlain astounded allies and opponents alike by suddenly revealing his view, that the true solution of the question was to be sought in some form of federation. It was upon the line of federation, and not upon the pattern of the self-governing colonies, that we should find a way out of the difficulty.[1] Men could hardly trust their ears. On the second reading, he startled us once more by declaring that he was perfectly prepared, the very next day if we pleased, to establish between this country and Ireland the relations subsisting between the provincial legislatures and the dominion parliament of Canada.[2] As to the first proposal, anybody could see that federation was a vastly more revolutionary operation than the delegation of certain legislative powers to a local parliament. Moreover before federating an Irish legislature, you must first create it. As to the second proposal, anybody could see on turning for a quarter of an hour to the Dominion Act of 1867, that in some of the particulars deemed by Mr. Chamberlain to be specially important, a provincial legislature in the Canadian system had more unfettered powers than the Irish legislature would have under the bill. Finally, he urged that inquiry into the possibility of satisfying the Irish demand should be carried on by a committee or commission representing all sections of the House.[3] In face of projects so strangely fashioned as this, Mr. Gladstone had a right to declare that just as the subject held the field in the public mind—for never before had been seen such signs of public absorption in the House and out of the House—so the ministerial plan held the field in parliament. It had many enemies, but it had not a single serious rival.

The debate on the second reading had hardly begun when Lord Salisbury placed in the hands of his adversaries a weapon with which they took care to do much execution. Ireland, he declared, is not one nation, but two nations. There were races like the Hottentots, and even the Hindoos, incapable of self-government. He would not place confidence in people who had acquired the habit of using knives and slugs. His policy was that parliament should enable the government of England to

[1] *Hansard*, 304, pp. 1204-6. [2] *Ibid.* 306, p. 697. [3] *Ibid.* 304, p. 1202.

govern Ireland. 'Apply that recipe honestly, consistently, and resolutely for twenty years, and at the end of that time you will find that Ireland will be fit to accept any gifts in the way of local government or repeal of coercion laws that you may wish to give her.'[1] In the same genial vein, Lord Salisbury told his Hottentot fellow-citizens—one of the two *invictæ gentes* of Mr. Pitt's famous quotation—that if some great store of imperial treasure were going to be expended on Ireland, instead of buying out landlords, it would be far more usefully employed in providing for the emigration of a million Irishmen. Explanations followed this inconvenient candour, but explanations are apt to be clumsy, and the pungency of the indiscretion kept it long alive. A humdrum speaker, who was able to contribute nothing better to the animation of debate, could always by insinuating a reference to Hottentots, knives and slugs, the deportation of a million Irishmen, and twenty years of continuous coercion, make sure of a roar of angry protest from his opponents, followed by a lusty counter-volley from his friends.

III

The reception of the bill by the organs of Irish opinion was easy to foretell. The nationalists accepted it in sober and rational language, subject to amendments on the head of finance and the constabulary clauses. The tories said it was a bill for setting up an Irish republic. It is another selfish English plan, said the moderates. Some Irishmen who had played with home rule while it was a phrase, drew back when they saw it in a bill. Others, while holding to home rule, objected to being reduced to the status of colonists. The body of home rulers who were protestant was small, and even against them it was retorted that for every protestant nationalist there were ten catholic unionists. The Fenian organs across the Atlantic, while quarrelling with such provisions as the two orders, 'one of which would be Irish and the other English,' did justice to the bravery of the attempt, and to the new moral forces which it would call out. The florid violence which the Fenians abandoned was now with proper variations adopted by Orangemen in the north. The General Assembly of the presbyterian church in Ireland passed strong resolutions against a parliament, in favour of a peasant proprietary, in favour of loyalty, and of coercion. A few days later the general synod of the protestant episcopal church followed suit, and denounced a parliament. The Orange print in Belfast drew up a Solemn League and Covenant for Ulster, to ignore and resist an Irish national government. Unionist prints in Dublin declared and indignantly repelled 'the selfish English design to get rid of the Irish nuisance from

[1] May 15, 1886.

Westminster, and reduce us to the position of a tributary dependency.'[1]

The pivot of the whole policy was the acceptance of the bill by the representatives of Ireland. On the evening when the bill was produced, Mr. Parnell made certain complaints as to the reservation of the control of the constabulary, as to the power of the first order to effect a deadlock, and as to finance. He explicitly and publicly warned the government from the first that, when the committee stage was reached, he would claim a large decrease in the fraction named for the imperial contribution. There was never any dissembling as to this. In private discussion, he had always held that the fair proportion of Irish contribution to imperial charges was not a fifteenth but a twentieth, and he said no more in the House than he had persistently said in the Irish secretary's room. There too he had urged what he also declared in the House: that he had always insisted that due representation should be given to the minority; that he should welcome any device for preventing ill-considered legislation, but that the provision in the bill, for the veto of the first order, would lead to prolonged obstruction and delay. Subject to modification on these three heads, he accepted the bill. 'I am convinced,' he said in concluding, 'that if our views are fairly met in committee regarding the defects to which I have briefly alluded,—the bill will be cheerfully accepted by the Irish people, and by their representatives, as a solution of the long-standing dispute between the two countries.'[2]

It transpired at a later date that just before the introduction of the bill, when Mr. Parnell had been made acquainted with its main proposals, he called a meeting of eight of his leading colleagues, told them what these proposals were, and asked them whether they would take the bill or leave it.[3] Some began to object to the absence of certain provisions, such as the immediate control of the constabulary, and the right over duties of customs. Mr. Parnell rose from the table, and clenched the discussion by informing them that if they declined the bill, the government would go. They at once agreed 'to accept it *pro tanto*, reserving for committee the right of enforcing and, if necessary, reconsidering their position with regard to these important questions.' This is neither more nor less than the form in which Mr. Parnell made his declaration

1 See for instance, *Irish Times*, May 8, and *Belfast Newsletter*, May 17, 18, 21, 1886.

2 *Hansard*, 304, p. 1134. Also 305, p. 1252.

3 When the bill was practically settled, he asked if he might have a draft of the main provisions, for communication to half a dozen of his confidential colleagues. After some demur, the Irish secretary consented, warning him of the damaging consequences of any premature divulgation. The draft was duly returned, and not a word leaked out. Some time afterwards Mr. Parnell recalled the incident to me. 'Three of the men to whom I showed the draft were newspaper men, and they were poor men, and any newspaper would have given them a thousand pounds for it. No very wonderful virtue, you may say. But how many of your House of Commons would believe it?'

in parliament. There was complete consistency between the terms of this declaration, and the terms of acceptance agreed to by his colleagues, as disclosed in the black days of December four years later. The charge of bad faith and hypocrisy so freely made against the Irishmen is wholly unwarranted by a single word in these proceedings. If the whole transaction had been known to the House of Commons, it could not have impaired by one jot or tittle the value set by the supporters of the bill on the assurances of the Irishmen that, in principle and subject to modification on points named, they accepted the bill as a settlement of the question, and would use their best endeavours to make it work.[1]

[1] For this point, see the *Times* report of the famous proceedings in Committee-room Fifteen, collected in the volume entitled *The Parnellite Split* (1891).

CHAPTER VII

THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE. DEFEAT OF THE BILL

(*1886*)

Everything on every side was full of traps and mines. . . . It was in the midst of this chaos of plots and counterplots . . . that the firmness of that noble person [Lord Rockingham] was put to the proof. He never stirred from his ground; no, not an inch.—BURKE (1766).

THE atmosphere in London became thick and hot with political passion. Veteran observers declared that our generation had not seen anything like it. Distinguished men of letters and, as it oddly happened, men who had won some distinction either by denouncing the legislative union, or by insisting on a decentralisation that should satisfy Irish national aspirations, now choked with anger because they were taken at their word. Just like irascible scholars of old time who settled controversies about corrupt texts by imputing to rival grammarians shameful crimes, so these writers could find no other explanation for an opinion that was not their own about Irish government, except moral turpitude and personal degradation. One professor of urbanity compared Mr. Gladstone to a desperate pirate burning his ship, or a gambler doubling and trebling his stake as luck goes against him. Such strange violence in calm natures, such pharisaic pretension in a world where we are all fallen, remains a riddle. Political differences were turned into social proscription. Whigs who could not accept the new policy were specially furious with whigs who could. Great ladies purified their lists of the names of old intimates. Amiable magnates excluded from their dinner-tables and their country houses once familiar friends who had fallen into the guilty heresy, and even harmless portraits of the heresiarch were sternly removed from the walls. At some of the political clubs it rained blackballs. It was a painful demonstration how thin after all is our social veneer, even when most highly polished.

When a royal birthday was drawing near, the prime minister wrote to Lord Granville, his unfailing counsellor in every diffi-

culty political and social :—'I am becoming seriously perplexed about my birthday dinner. Hardly any peers of the higher ranks will be available, and not many of the lower. Will the seceding colleagues come if they are asked? (Argyll, to whom I applied privately on the score of old friendship, has already *refused* me.) I am for asking them ; but I expect refusal. Lastly, it has become customary for the Prince of Wales to dine with me on that day, and he brings his eldest son now that the young Prince is of age. But his position would be very awkward, if he comes and witnesses a great nakedness of the land. What do you say to all this? If you cannot help me, who can?' Most of the seceding colleagues accepted, and the dinner came off well enough, though as the host wrote to a friend beforehand, 'If Hartington were to get up and move a vote of want of confidence after dinner, he would almost carry it.' The Prince was unable to be present, and so the great nakedness was by him unseen, but Prince Albert Victor was there instead, and is described by Mr. Gladstone as 'most kind.'

The conversion of Peel to free trade forty years before had led to the same species of explosion, though Peel had the court strongly with him. Both then and now it was the case of a feud within the bosom of a party, and such feuds like civil wars have ever been the fiercest. In each case there was a sense of betrayal—at least as unreasonable in 1886 as it was in 1846. The provinces somehow took things more rationally than the metropolis. Those who were stunned by the fierce moans of London over the assured decline in national honour and credit, the imminence of civil war, and the ultimate destruction of British power, found their acquaintances in the country excited and interested, but still clothed and in their right minds. The gravity of the question was fully understood, but in taking sides ordinary men did not talk as if they were in for the battle of Armageddon. The attempt to kindle the torch of religious fear or hate was in Great Britain happily a failure. The mass of liberal presbyterians in Scotland, and of nonconformists in England and Wales, stood firm, though some of their most eminent and able divines resisted the new project, less on religious grounds than on what they took to be the balance of political arguments. Mr. Gladstone was able to point to the conclusive assurances he had received that the kindred peoples in the colonies and America regarded with warm and fraternal sympathy the present effort to settle the long-vexed and troubled relations between Great Britain and Ireland :—

> We must not be discouraged if at home and particularly in the upper ranks of society, we hear a variety of discordant notes, notes alike discordant from our policy and from one another. You have before you a cabinet determined in its purpose and an intelligible plan. I own I see

very little else in the political arena that is determined or that is intelligible.

Inside the House subterranean activity was at its height all through the month of May. This was the critical period. The regular opposition spoke little and did little; with composed interest they watched others do their work. On the ministerial side men wavered and changed and changed again, from day to day and almost from hour to hour. Never were the motions of the pendulum so agitated and so irregular. So novel and complex a problem was a terrible burden for a new parliament. About half its members had not sat in any parliament before. The whips were new, some of the leaders on the front benches were new, and those of them who were most in earnest about the policy were too heavily engrossed in the business of the measure, to have much time for the exercises of explanation, argument, and persuasion with their adherents. One circumstance told powerfully for ministers. The great central organisation of the liberal party came decisively over to Mr. Gladstone (May 5), and was followed by nearly all the local associations in the country. Neither whig secession nor radical dubitation shook the strength inherent in such machinery, in a community where the principle of government by party has solidly established itself. This was almost the single consolidating and steadying element in that hour of dispersion. A serious move in the opposite direction had taken place three weeks earlier. A great meeting was held at the Opera House, in the Haymarket, presided over by the accomplished whig nobleman who had the misfortune to be Irish viceroy in the two dismal years from 1880, and it was attended both by Lord Salisbury on one side and Lord Hartington on the other. This was the first broad public mark of liberal secession, and of that practical fusion between whig and tory which the new Irish policy had actually precipitated, but to which all the signs in the political heavens had been for three or four years unmistakably pointing.

The strength of the friends of the bill was twofold: first, it lay in the dislike of coercion as the only visible alternative; and second, it lay in the hope of at last touching the firm ground of a final settlement with Ireland. Their weakness was also twofold: first, misgivings about the exclusion of the Irish members; and second, repugnance to the scheme for land purchase. There were not a few, indeed, who pronounced the exclusion of Irish members to be the most sensible part of the plan. Mr. Gladstone retained his impartiality, but knew that if we proposed to keep the Irishmen, we should be run in upon quite as fiercely from the other side. Mr. Parnell stood to his original position. Any regular and compulsory attendance at Westminster, he said, would be highly objectionable to his friends. Further, the right of

Irish members to take part in purely English as well as imperial business would be seized upon by English politicians, whenever it should answer their purpose, as a pretext for interfering in Irish affairs. In short, he foresaw, as all did, the difficulties that would inevitably arise from retention. But the tide ran more and more strongly the other way. Scotland grew rather restive at a proposal which, as she apprehended, would make a precedent for herself when her turn for extension of local powers should come, and Scotchmen had no intention of being shut out from a voice in imperial affairs. In England, the catholics professed alarm at the prospect of losing the only catholic force in the House of Commons. 'We cannot spare one of you,' cried Cardinal Manning. Some partisans of imperial federation took it into their heads that the plan for Ireland would be fatal to a plan for the whole empire, though others more rationally conceived that if there was to be a scheme for the empire, schemes for its several parts must come first. Some sages, while pretending infinite friendship to home rule, insisted that the parliament at Westminster should retain a direct and active veto upon legislation at Dublin, and that Irish members should remain as they were in London. That is to say, every precaution should be taken to ensure a stiff fight at Westminster over every Irish measure of any importance that had already been fought on College Green. Speaking generally, the feeling against this provision was due less to the anomaly of taxation without representation, than to fears for the unity of the empire and the supremacy of parliament.

The Purchase bill proved from the first to be an almost intolerable dose. Vivid pictures were drawn of a train of railway trucks two miles long, loaded with millions of bright sovereigns, all travelling from the pocket of the British son of toil to the pocket of the idle Irish landlord. The nationalists from the first urged that the scheme for home rule should not be weighted with a land scheme, though they were willing to accept it so long as it was not used to prejudice the larger demand. On the other side the Irish landlords themselves peremptorily rejected the plan that had been devised for their protection.

The air was thick with suggestions, devices, contrivances, expedients, possible or madly impossible. Proposals or embryonic notions of proposals floated like motes in a sunbeam. Those to whom lobby diplomacy is as the breath of their nostrils, were in their element. So were the worthy persons who are always ready with ingenious schemes for catching a vote or two here, at the cost of twenty votes elsewhere. Intrigue may be too dark a word, but coaxing, bullying, managing, and all the other arts of party emergency, went on at an unprecedented rate. Of these arts, the supervising angels will

hardly record that any section had a monopoly. The legerdemain that makes words pass for things, and liquefies things into words, achieved many flashes of success. But they were only momentary, and the solid obstacles remained. The foundations of human character are much the same in all historic ages, and every public crisis brings out the same types.

Much depended on Mr. Bright, the great citizen and noble orator, who had in the last five-and-forty years fought and helped to win more than one battle for wise and just government; whose constancy had confronted storms of public obloquy without yielding an inch of his ground: whose eye for the highest questions of state had proved itself singularly sure; and whose simplicity, love of right, and unsophisticated purity of public and private conduct, commanded the trust and the reverence of nearly all the better part of his countrymen. To Mr. Bright the eyes of many thousands were turned in these weeks of anxiety and doubt. He had in public kept silence, though in private he made little secret of his disapproval of the new policy. Before the bill was produced he had a prolonged conversation (March 20) with Mr. Gladstone at Downing Street. 'Long and weighty,' are the words in the diary. The minister sketched his general design. Mr. Bright stated his objections much in the form in which, as we shall see, he stated them later. Of the exclusion of the Irish members he approved. The Land bill he thought quite wrong, for why should so enormous an effort be made for one interest only? He expressed his sympathy with Mr. Gladstone in his great difficulties, could not but admire his ardour, and came away with the expectation that the obstacles would be found invincible, and that the minister would retire and leave others to approach the task on other lines. Other important persons, it may be observed, derived at this time a similar impression from Mr. Gladstone's language to them: that he might discern the impossibility of his policy, that he would admit it, and would then hand the responsibility over to Lord Hartington, or whoever else might be willing to face it.

On the other hand, Mr. Bright left the minister himself not without hopes that as things went forward he might count on this potent auxiliary. So late as the middle of May, though he could not support, it was not certain that he would actively oppose. The following letter to Mr. Gladstone best describes his attitude at this time:—

Mr. Bright to Mr. Gladstone.

Rochdale, May 13th, 1886.

My dear Gladstone,—Your note just received has put me in a great difficulty. To-day is the anniversary of the greatest sorrow of my life, and I feel pressed to spend it at home. I sent a message to Mr. Arnold Morley last evening to say that I did not intend to return to town before

Monday next—but I shall now arrange to go to-morrow—although I do not see how I can be of service in the great trouble which has arisen.

I feel outside all the contending sections of the liberal party—for I am not in favour of home rule, or the creation of a Dublin parliament—nor can I believe in any scheme of federation as shadowed forth by Mr. Chamberlain.

I do not believe that with regard to the Irish question 'the resources of civilisation are exhausted'; and I think the plan of your bill is full of complexity, and gives no hope of successful working in Ireland or of harmony between Westminster and Dublin. I may say that my regard for you and my sympathy with you has made me silent in the discussion on the bills before the House. I cannot consent to a measure which is so offensive to the whole protestant population of Ireland, and to the whole sentiment of the province of Ulster so far as its loyal and protestant people are concerned. I cannot agree to exclude them from the protection of the imperial parliament. I would do much to clear the rebel party from Westminster, and I do not sympathise with those who wish to retain them, but admit there is much force in the arguments on this point which are opposed to my views upon it.

Up to this time I have not been able to bring myself to the point of giving a vote in favour of your bills. I am grieved to have to say this. As to the Land bill, if it comes to a second reading, I fear I must vote against it. It may be that my hostility to the rebel party, looking at their conduct since your government was formed six years ago, disables me from taking an impartial view of this great question. If I could believe them loyal, if they were honourable and truthful men, I could yield them much; but I suspect that your policy of surrender to them will only place more power in their hands, to war with greater effect against the unity of the three kingdoms with no increase of good to the Irish people.

How then can I be of service to you or to the real interests of Ireland if I come up to town? I cannot venture to advise you, so superior to me in party tactics and in experienced statesmanship, and I am not so much in accord with Mr. Chamberlain as to make it likely that I can say anything that will affect his course. One thing I may remark, that it appears to me that measures of the gravity of those now before parliament cannot and ought not to be thrust through the House by force of a small majority. The various reform bills, the Irish church bill, the two great land bills, were passed by very large majorities. In the present case, not only the whole tory party oppose, but a very important section of the liberal party; and although numerous meetings of clubs and associations have passed resolutions of confidence in you, yet generally they have accepted your Irish government bill as a 'basis' only, and have admitted the need of important changes in the bill—changes which in reality would destroy the bill. Under these circumstances it seems to me that more time should be given for the consideration of the Irish question. Parliament is not ready for it, and the intelligence of the country is not ready for it. If it be possible, I should wish that no division should be taken upon the bill. If the second reading should be carried only by a *small* majority, it would not forward the bill; but it would strengthen the rebel party in their future agitation, and make it more difficult for another session or another parliament to deal with the question with some sense of independence of that party. In any

case of a division, it is I suppose certain that a considerable majority of British members will oppose the bill. Thus, whilst it will have the support of the rebel members, it will be opposed by a majority from Great Britain and by a most hostile vote from all that is loyal in Ireland. The result will be, if a majority supports you it will be one composed in effect of the men who for six years past have insulted the Queen, have torn down the national flag, have declared your lord lieutenant guilty of deliberate murder, and have made the imperial parliament an assembly totally unable to manage the legislative business for which it annually assembles at Westminster.

Pray forgive me for writing this long letter. I need not assure you of my sympathy with you, or my sorrow at being unable to support your present policy in the House or the country. The more I consider the question, the more I am forced in a direction contrary to my wishes.

For thirty years I have preached justice to Ireland. I am as much in her favour now as in past times, but I do not think it justice or wisdom for Great Britain to consign her population, including Ulster and all her protestant families, to what there is of justice and wisdom in the Irish party now sitting in the parliament in Westminster.

Still if you think I can be of service, a note to the Reform Club will, I hope, find me there to-morrow evening.—Ever most sincerely yours,

JOHN BRIGHT.

An old parliamentary friend, of great weight and authority, went to Mr. Bright to urge him to support a proposal to read the bill a second time, and then to hang it up for six months. Bright suffered sore travail of spirit. At the end of an hour the peacemaker rose to depart. Bright pressed him to continue the wrestle. After three-quarters of an hour more of it, the same performance took place. It was not until a third hour of discussion that Mr. Bright would let it come to an end, and at the end he was still uncertain. The next day the friend met him, looking worn and gloomy. 'You may guess,' Mr. Bright said, 'what sort of a night I have had.' He had decided to vote against the second reading. The same person went to Lord Hartington. He took time to deliberate, and then finally said; 'No, Mr. Gladstone and I do not mean the same thing.'

II

The centre of interest lay in the course that might be finally taken by those who declared that they accepted the principle of the bill, but demurred upon detail. It was upon the group led from Birmingham that the issue hung. 'There are two principles in the bill,' said Mr. Chamberlain at this time, 'which I regard as vital. The first is the principle of autonomy, to which I am able to give a hearty assent. The second is involved in the method of giving effect to this autonomy. In the bill the government have proceeded on the lines of separation or of colonial independence, whereas, in my humble judgment, they should have adopted the principle of federation as the only one in accordance with democratic aspirations and

experience.'[1] He was even so strong for autonomy, that he was ready to face all the immense difficulties of federation, whether on the Canadian or some other pattern, rather than lose autonomy. Yet he was ready to slay the bill that made autonomy possible. To kill the bill was to kill autonomy. To say that they would go to the country on the plan, and not on the principle, was idle. If the election were to go against the government, that would destroy not only the plan which they disliked, but the principle of which they declared that they warmly approved. The new government that would in that case come into existence, would certainly have nothing to say either to plan or principle.

Two things, said Mr. Chamberlain on the ninth night of the debate, had become clear during the controversy. One was that the British democracy had a passionate devotion to the prime minister. The other was the display of a sentiment out of doors, 'the universality and completeness of which, I dare say, has taken many of us by surprise, in favour of some form of home rule to Ireland, which will give to the Irish people some greater control over their own affairs.'[2] It did not need so acute a strategist as Mr. Chamberlain to perceive that the only hope of rallying any considerable portion of the left wing of the party to the dissentient flag, in face of this strong popular sentiment embodied in a supereminent minister, was to avoid as much as possible all irreconcilable language against either the minister or the sentiment, even while taking energetic steps to unhorse the one and to nullify the other.

The prime minister meanwhile fought the battle as a battle for a high public design once begun should be fought. He took few secondary arguments, but laboured only to hold up to men's imagination, and to burn into their understanding, the lines of central policy, the shame and dishonour from which it would relieve us, the new life with which it would inspire Ireland, the ease that it would bring to parliament in England. His tenacity, his force and resource were inexhaustible. He was harassed on every side. The Irish leader pressed him hard upon finance. Old adherents urged concession about exclusion. The radicals disliked the two orders. Minor points for consideration in committee rained in upon him, as being good reasons for altering the bill before it came in sight of committee. Not a single constructive proposal made any way in the course of the debate. All was critical and negative. Mr. Gladstone's grasp was unshaken, and though he saw remote bearings and interdependent consequences where others supposed all to be plain sailing, yet if the principle were only saved he professed infinite pliancy. He protested that there ought to be no stereotyping of our minds against modifications, and that the widest possible

[1] Letter to Mr. T. H. Bolton, M.P. *Times*, May 8, 1886.
[2] *Hansard*, 306, p. 698.

variety of modes of action should be kept open; and he 'hammered hard at his head,' as he put it, to see what could be worked out in the way of admitting Irish members without danger, and without intolerable inconvenience. If anybody considered, he continued to repeat in endless forms, that there was another set of provisions by which better and fuller effect could be given to the principle of the bill, they were free to displace all the particulars that hindered this better and fuller effect being given to the principle.[1]

III

At the beginning of May the unionist computation was that 119 on the ministerial side of the House had, with or without qualification, promised to vote against the second reading. Of these, 70 had publicly committed themselves, and 23 more were supposed to be absolutely certain. If the whole House voted, this estimate of 93 would give a majority of 17 against the bill.[2] The leader of the radical wing, however, reckoned that 55 out of the 119 would vote with him for the second reading, if he pronounced the ministerial amendments of the bill satisfactory. The amendments demanded were the retention of the Irish members, a definite declaration of the supremacy of the imperial parliament, a separate assembly for Ulster, and the abolition of the restrictive devices for the representation of minorities. Less than all this might have been taken in committee, provided that the government would expressly say before the second reading, that they would retain the Irish representation on its existing footing. The repeated offer by ministers to regard this as an open question was derided, because it was contended that if the bill were once safe through its second reading, Mr. Bright and the whigs would probably vote with ministers against Irish inclusion.

Even if this ultimatum had been accepted, there would still have remained the difficulty of the Land bill, of which Mr. Chamberlain had announced that he would move the rejection. In the face of ever-growing embarrassments and importunities, recourse was had to the usual device of a meeting of the party at the foreign office (May 27). The circular calling the meeting was addressed to those liberals who, while retaining full freedom on all particulars in the bill, were 'in favour of the establishment of a legislative body in Dublin for the management of affairs specifically and exclusively Irish.' This was henceforth to be the test of party membership. A man who was for an Irish legislative body was expected to come to the party meeting, and a man who was against it was expected to stay away. Many thought this discrimination a mistake. Some two hundred and twenty members attended. The pith of the prime minister's speech, which lasted for an hour, came to this: that

[1] *Hansard*, 306, p. 1218. [2] In the end exactly 93 liberals did vote against the bill.

the government would not consent to emasculate the principle of the bill, or turn it into a mockery, a delusion, and a snare; that members who did not wholly agree with the bill, might still in accordance with the strict spirit of parliamentary rules vote for the second reading with a view to its amendment in committee; that such a vote would not involve support of the Land bill; that he was ready to consider any plan for the retention of the Irish members, provided that it did not interfere with the liberty of the Irish legislative body, and would not introduce confusion into the imperial parliament. Finally, as to procedure—and here his anxious audience fell almost breathless—they could either after a second reading hang up the bill, and defer committee until the autumn; or they could wind up the session, prorogue, and introduce the bill afresh with the proper amendments in October. The cabinet, he told them, inclined to the later course.

Before the meeting Mr. Parnell had done his best to impress upon ministers the mischievous effect that would be produced on Irish members and in Ireland, by any promise to withdraw the bill after the second reading. On the previous evening, I received from him a letter of unusual length. 'You of course,' he said, 'are the best judges of what the result may be in England, but if it be permitted me to express an opinion, I should say that withdrawal could scarcely fail to give great encouragement to those whom it cannot conciliate, to depress and discourage those who are now the strongest fighters for the measure, to produce doubt and wonder in the country and to cool enthusiasm; and finally, when the same bill is again produced in the autumn, to disappoint and cause reaction among those who may have been temporarily disarmed by withdrawal, and to make them at once more hostile and less easy to appease.' This letter I carried to Mr. Gladstone the next morning, and read aloud to him a few minutes before he was to cross over to the foreign office. For a single instant—the only occasion that I can recall during all these severe weeks—his patience broke. The recovery was as rapid as the flash, for he knew the duty of the lieutenant of the watch to report the signs of rock or shoal. He was quite as conscious of all that was urged in Mr. Parnell's letter as was its writer, but perception of risks on one side did not overcome risks on the other. The same evening they met for a second time:—

May 27.— . . . Mr. Gladstone and Parnell had a conversation in my room. Parnell courteous enough, but depressed and gloomy. Mr. Gladstone worn and fagged. . . . When he was gone, Parnell repeated moodily that he might not be able to vote for the second reading, if it were understood that after the second reading the bill was to be withdrawn. 'Very well,' said I, 'that will of course destroy the government and the policy; but be that as it may, the cabinet, I am positive, won't change their line.'

The proceedings at the foreign office brought to the supporters of government a lively sense of relief. In the course of the evening a score of the waverers were found to have been satisfied, and were struck off the dissentient lists. But the relief did not last for many hours. The opposition instantly challenged ministers (May 28) to say plainly which of the two courses they intended to adopt. Though short, this was the most vivacious debate of all. Was the bill to be withdrawn, or was it to be postponed? If it was to be withdrawn, then, argued the tory leader (Sir M. H. Beach) in angry tones, the vote on the second reading would be a farce. If it was to be postponed, what was that but to paralyse the forces of law and order in Ireland in the meantime. Such things were trifling with parliament, trifling with a vital constitutional question, and trifling with the social order which the government professed to be so anxious to restore. A bill read a second time on such terms as these would be neither more nor less than a Continuance-in-Office bill.

This biting sally raised the temper of the House on both sides, and Mr. Gladstone met it with that dignity which did not often fail to quell even the harshest of his adversaries. 'You pronounce that obviously the motive of the government is to ensure their own continuance in office. They prefer that to all the considerations connected with the great issue before them, and their minds in fact are of such a mean and degraded order, that they can only be acted upon, not by motives of honour and duty, but simply by those of selfishness and personal interest. Sir, I do not condescend to discuss that imputation. The dart aimed at our shield, being such a dart as that, is *telum imbelle sine ictu*.'[1]

The speaker then got on to the more hazardous part of the ground. He proceeded to criticise the observation of the leader of the opposition that ministers had undertaken to remodel the bill. 'That happy word,' he said, 'as applied to the structure of the bill, is a pure invention.' Lord Randolph interjected that the word used was not 'remodelled,' but 'reconstructed.' 'Does the noble lord dare to say,' asked the minister, 'that it was used in respect of the bill?' 'Yes,' said the noble lord. 'Never, never,' cried the minister, with a vehemence that shook the hearts of doubting followers; 'it was used with respect to one particular clause, and one particular point of the bill, namely, so much of it as touches the future relation of the representatives of Ireland to the imperial parliament.' Before the exciting episode was over, it was stated definitely that if the bill were read a second time, ministers would advise a prorogation and re-introduce the bill with amendments. The effect of this couple of hours was to convince the House that the government had made up their minds that it was easier

[1] *Hansard*, 306, p. 322.

and safer to go to the country with the plan as it stood, than to agree to changes that would entangle them in new embarrassments, and discredit their confidence in their own handiwork. Ingenious negotiators perceived that their toil had been fruitless. Every man now knew the precise situation that he had to face, in respect alike of the Irish bill and liberal unity.

On the day following this decisive scene (May 29), under the direction of the radical leader an invitation to a conference was issued to those members 'who being in favour of some sort of autonomy for Ireland, disapproved of the government bills in their present shape.' The form of the invitation is remarkable in view of its ultimate effect on Irish autonomy. The meeting was held on May 31, in the same committee room upstairs that four years later became associated with the most cruel of all phases of the Irish controversy. Mr. Chamberlain presided, and some fifty-five gentlemen attended. Not all of them had hitherto been understood to be in favour either of some sort, or of any sort, of autonomy for Ireland. The question was whether they should content themselves with abstention from the division, or should go into the lobby against the government. If they abstained the bill would pass, and an extension of the party schism would be averted. The point was carried, as all great parliamentary issues are, by considerations apart from the nice and exact balance of argument on the merits. In anxious and distracting moments like this, when so many arguments tell in one way and so many tell in another, a casting vote often belongs to the moral weight of some particular person. The chairman opened in a neutral sense. It seems to have been mainly the moral weight of Mr. Bright that sent down the scale. He was not present, but he sent a letter. He hoped that every man would use his own mind, but for his part he must vote against the bill. This letter was afterwards described as the death-warrant of the bill and of the administration. The course of the men who had been summoned because they were favourable to some sort of home rule was decided by the illustrious statesman who opposed every sort of home rule. Their boat was driven straight upon the rocks of coercion by the influence of the great orator who had never in all his career been more eloquent than when he was denouncing the mischief and futility of Irish coercion, and protesting that force is no remedy.

One of the best speakers in the House, though not at that time in the cabinet, was making an admirably warm and convinced defence alike of the policy and the bill while these proceedings were going on. But Mr. Fowler was listened to by men of pre-occupied minds. All knew what momentous business was on foot in another part of the parliamentary precincts. Many in the ranks were confident that abstention

would carry the day. Others knew that the meeting had been summoned for no such purpose, and they made sure that the conveners would have their way. The quiet inside the House was intense and unnatural. As at last the news of the determination upstairs to vote against the bill ran along the benches before the speaker sat down, men knew that the ministerial day was lost. It was estimated by the heads of the 'Chamberlain group' that if they abstained, the bill would pass by a majority of five. Such a bill carried by such a majority could of course not have proceeded much further. The principle of autonomy would have been saved, and time would have been secured for deliberation upon a new plan. More than once Mr. Gladstone observed that no decision taken from the beginning of the crisis to the end was either more incomprehensible or more disastrous.

IV

The division was taken a little after one o'clock on the morning of the 8th of June. The Irish leader made one of the most masterly speeches that ever fell from him. Whether agreeing with or differing from the policy, every unprejudiced listener felt that this was not the mere dialectic of a party debater, dealing smartly with abstract or verbal or artificial arguments, but the utterance of a statesman with his eye firmly fixed upon the actual circumstances of the nation for whose government this bill would make him responsible. As he dealt with Ulster, with finance, with the supremacy of parliament, with the loyal minority, with the settlement of education in an Irish legislature,—soberly, steadily, deliberately, with that full, familiar, deep insight into the facts of a country, which is only possible to a man who belongs to it and has passed his life in it, the effect of Mr. Parnell's speech was to make even able disputants on either side look little better than amateurs.

The debate was wound up for the regular opposition by Sir Michael Hicks Beach, who was justly regarded throughout the session as having led his party with remarkable skill and judgment. Like the Irish leader, he seemed to be inspired by the occasion to a performance beyond his usual range, and he delivered the final charge with strong effect. The bill, he said, was the concoction of the prime minister and the Irish secretary, and the cabinet had no voice in the matter. The government had delayed the progress of the bill for a whole long and weary month, in order to give party wirepullers plenty of time in which to frighten waverers. To treat a vote on the second reading as a mere vote on a principle, without reference to the possibility of applying it, was a mischievous farce. Could anybody dream that if he supported the second reading now, he would not compromise his action in the autumn, and would not be appealed to as having made a virtual promise to Ireland,

of which it would be impossible to disappoint her? As for the bill itself, whatever lawyers might say of the theoretic maintenance of supremacy, in practice it would have gone. All this side of the case was put by the speaker with the straight and vigorous thrust that always works with strong effect in this great arena of contest.

Then came the unflagging veteran with the last of his five speeches. He was almost as white as the flower in his coat, but the splendid compass, the flexibility, the moving charm and power of his voice, were never more wonderful. The construction of the speech was a masterpiece, the temper of it unbroken, its freedom from taunt and bitterness and small personality incomparable. Even if Mr. Gladstone had been in the prime of his days, instead of a man of seventy-six years all struck; even if he had been at his ease for the last four months, instead of labouring with indomitable toil at the two bills, bearing all the multifarious burdens of the head of a government, and all the weight of the business of the leader of the House, undergoing all the hourly strain and contention of a political situation of unprecedented difficulty,—much of the contention being of that peculiarly trying and painful sort which means the parting of colleagues and friends—his closing speech would still have been a surprising effort of free, argumentative, and fervid appeal. With the fervid appeal was mingled more than one piece of piquant mockery. Mr. Chamberlain had said that a dissolution had no terrors for him. 'I do not wonder at it. I do not see how a dissolution can have any terrors for him. He has trimmed his vessel, and he has touched his rudder in such a masterly way, that in whichever direction the winds of heaven may blow they must fill his sails. Supposing that at an election public opinion should be very strong in favour of the bill, my right hon. friend would then be perfectly prepared to meet that public opinion, and tell it, "I declared strongly that I adopted the principle of the bill." On the other hand, if public opinion were very adverse to the bill, he again is in complete armour, because he says, "Yes, I voted against the bill." Supposing, again, public opinion is in favour of a very large plan for Ireland, my right hon. friend is perfectly provided for that case also. The government plan was not large enough for him, and he proposed in his speech on the introduction of the bill that we should have a measure on the basis of federation, which goes beyond this bill. Lastly—and now I have very nearly boxed the compass—supposing that public opinion should take quite a different turn, and instead of wanting very large measures for Ireland, should demand very small measures for Ireland, still the resources of my right hon. friend are not exhausted, because he is then able to point out that the last of his plans was for four provincial circuits controlled from London.' All

these alternatives and provisions were visibly 'creations of the vivid imagination, born of the hour and perishing with the hour, totally unavailable for the solution of a great and difficult problem.'

Now, said the orator, 'was one of the golden moments of our history, one of those opportunities which may come and may go, but which rarely return, or if they return, return at long intervals, and under circumstances which no man can forecast. There was such a golden moment in 1795, on the mission of Lord Fitzwilliam. At that moment the parliament of Grattan was on the point of solving the Irish problem. The cup was at Ireland's lips, and she was ready to drink it, when the hand of England rudely and ruthlessly dashed it to the ground in obedience to the wild and dangerous intimations of an Irish faction. There had been no great day of hope for Ireland since, no day when you might completely and definitely hope to end the controversy till now—more than ninety years. The long periodic time had at last run out, and the star had again mounted into the heavens.

This strain of living passion was sustained with all its fire and speed to the very close. 'Ireland stands at your bar expectant, hopeful, almost suppliant. Her words are the words of truth and soberness. She asks a blessed oblivion of the past, and in that oblivion our interest is deeper even than hers. You have been asked to-night to abide by the traditions of which we are the heirs. What traditions? By the Irish traditions? Go into the length and breadth of the world, ransack the literature of all countries, find if you can a single voice, a single book, in which the conduct of England towards Ireland is anywhere treated except with profound and bitter condemnation. Are these the traditions by which we are exhorted to stand? No, they are a sad exception to the glory of our country. They are a broad and black blot upon the pages of its history, and what we want to do is to stand by the traditions of which we are the heirs in all matters except our relations with Ireland, and to make our relation with Ireland to conform to the other traditions of our country. So we treat our traditions, so we hail the demand of Ireland for what I call a blessed oblivion of the past. She asks also a boon for the future; and that boon for the future, unless we are much mistaken, will be a boon to us in respect of honour, no less than a boon to her in respect of happiness, prosperity and peace. Such, sir, is her prayer. Think, I beseech you; think well, think wisely, think, not for the moment, but for the years that are to come, before you reject this bill.'

The question was put, the sand glass was turned upon the table, the division bells were set ringing. Even at this moment, the ministerial whips believed that some were still wavering. A reference made by Mr. Parnell to harmonious communica-

tions in the previous summer with a tory minister, inclined them to vote for the bill. On the other hand, the prospect of going to an election without a tory opponent was no weak temptation to a weak man. A common impression was that the bill would be beaten by ten or fifteen. Others were sure that it would be twice as much as either figure. Some on the treasury bench, perhaps including the prime minister himself, hoped against hope that the hostile majority might not be more than five or six. It proved to be thirty. The numbers were 343 against 313. Ninety-three liberals voted against the bill. These with the two tellers were between one-third and one-fourth of the full liberal strength from Great Britain. So ended the first engagement in this long campaign. As I passed into his room at the House with Mr. Gladstone that night, he seemed for the first time to bend under the crushing weight of the burden that he had taken up.

V

When ministers went into the cabinet on the following day, three of them inclined pretty strongly towards resignation as a better course than dissolution ; mainly on the ground that the incoming government would then have to go to the country with a policy of their own. Mr. Gladstone, however, entirely composed though pallid, at once opened the case with a list of twelve reasons for recommending dissolution, and the reasons were so cogent that his opening of the case was also its closing. They were entirely characteristic, for they began with precedent and the key was courage. He knew of no instance where a ministry defeated under circumstances like ours, upon a great policy or on a vote of confidence, failed to appeal to the country. Then with a view to the enthusiasm of our friends in this country, as well as to feeling in Ireland, it was essential that we should not let the flag go down. We had been constantly challenged to a dissolution, and not to take the challenge up would be a proof of mistrust, weakness, and a faint heart. 'My conclusion is,' he said, 'a dissolution is formidable, but resignation would mean for the present juncture abandonment of the cause.' His conclusion was accepted without comment. The experts outside the cabinet were convinced that a bold front was the best way of securing the full fighting power of the party. The white feather on such an issue, and with so many minds wavering, would be a sure provocative of defeat.

Mr. Gladstone enumerated to the Queen what he took to be the new elements in the case. There were on the side of the government, 1. The transfer of the Irish vote from the tories, 2. The popular enthusiasm in the liberal masses which he had never seen equalled. But what was the electoral value of enthusiasm against (*a*) anti-Irish prejudices, (*b*) the power of rank, station, and wealth, (*c*) the kind of influence exercised by

the established clergy, 'perversely applied as of course Mr. Gladstone thinks in politics, but resting upon a very solid basis as founded on the generally excellent and devoted work which they do in their parishes.' This remained to be proved. On the other side there was the whig defection, with the strange and unnatural addition from Birmingham. 'Mr. Gladstone himself has no skill in these matters, and dare not lay an opinion before your Majesty on the probable general result.' He thought there was little chance, if any, of a tory majority in the new parliament. Opinion taken as a whole seemed to point to a majority not very large, whichever way it may be.

No election was ever fought more keenly, and never did so many powerful men fling themselves with livelier activity into a great struggle. The heaviest and most telling attack came from Mr. Bright, who had up to now in public been studiously silent. Every word, as they said of Daniel Webster, seemed to weigh a pound. His arguments were mainly those of his letter already given, but they were delivered with a gravity and force that told powerfully upon the large phalanx of doubters all over the kingdom. On the other side, Mr. Gladstone's plume waved in every part of the field. He unhorsed an opponent as he flew past on the road; his voice rang with calls as thrilling as were ever heard in England; he appealed to the individual, to his personal responsibility, to the best elements in him, to the sense of justice, to the powers of hope and of sympathy; he displayed to the full that rare combination of qualities that had always enabled him to view affairs in all their range, at the same time from the high commanding eminence and on the near and sober level.

He left London on June 17 on his way to Edinburgh, and found 'wonderful demonstrations all along the road; many little speeches; could not be helped.' 'The feeling here,' he wrote from Edinburgh (June 21), 'is truly wonderful, especially when the detestable state of the press is considered.' Even Mr. Goschen, whom he described as 'supplying in the main soul, brains, and movement to the dissentient body,' was handsomely beaten in one of the Edinburgh divisions, so fatal was the proximity of Achilles. '*June* 22. Off to Glasgow, 12¾. Meeting at 3. Spoke an hour and twenty minutes. Off at 5.50. Reached Hawarden at 12.30 or 40. Some speeches by the way; others I declined. The whole a scene of triumph. God help us, His poor creatures.' At Hawarden, he found chaos in his room, and he set to work upon it, but he did not linger. On June 25, 'off to Manchester; great meeting in the Free Trade Hall. Strain excessive. Five miles through the streets to Mr. Agnew's; a wonderful spectacle half the way.' From Manchester he wrote, 'I have found the display of enthusiasm far beyond all former measure,' and the torrid heat of the meeting almost broke him down, but friends around him heard him

murmur, 'I must do it,' and bracing himself with tremendous effort he went on. Two days later (June 28) he wound up the campaign in a speech at Liverpool, which even old and practised political hands who were there, found the most magnificent of them all. Staying at Courthey, the residence of his nephews, in the morning he enters, 'Worked up the Irish question once more for my last function. Seven or eight hours of processional uproar, and a speech of an hour and forty minutes to five or six thousand people in Hengler's Circus. Few buildings give so noble a presentation of an audience. Once more my voice held out in a marvellous manner. I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit, but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me.'

He had no sooner returned to Hawarden, than he wrote to tell Mrs. Gladstone (July 2) of a stroke which was thought to have a curiously dæmonic air about it:—

The Leith business will show you I have not been inactive here. —— former M.P. *attended my meeting in the Music Hall*, and was greeted by me accordingly (he had voted against us after wobbling about much). Hearing by late post yesterday that waiting to the last he had then declared against us, I telegraphed down to Edinburgh in much indignation, that they might if they liked put me up against him, and I would go down again and speak if they wished it. They seem to have acted with admirable pluck and promptitude. Soon after mid-day to-day I received telegrams to say I am elected for Midlothian,[1] and *also for Leith*, —— having retired rather than wait to be beaten. I told them instantly to publish this, as it may do good.

The Queen, who had never relished these oratorical crusades whether he was in opposition or in office, did not approve of the first minister of the crown addressing meetings outside of his own constituency. In reply to a gracious and frank letter from Balmoral, Mr. Gladstone wrote:—

He must state frankly what it is that has induced him thus to yield [to importunity for speeches]. It is that since the death of Lord Beaconsfield, in fact since 1880, the leaders of the opposition, Lord Salisbury and Lord Iddesleigh (he has not observed the same practice in the case of Sir M. H. Beach) have established a rule of what may be called popular agitation, by addressing public meetings from time to time at places with which they were not connected. This method was peculiarly marked in the case of Lord Salisbury as a peer, and this change on the part of the leaders of opposition has induced Mr. Gladstone to deviate on this critical occasion from the rule which he had (he believes) generally or uniformly observed in former years. He is, as he has previously apprised your Majesty, aware of the immense responsibility he has assumed, and of the severity of just condemnation which will be pronounced upon him, if he should eventually prove to have been wrong. But your Majesty will be the first to perceive that, even if it had been possible for him to decline this great contest, it was not possible for him having entered upon it, to conduct it in a half-hearted manner, or to omit the use of any means

[1] He was returned without opposition.

requisite in order to place (what he thinks) the true issue before the country.

Nature, however, served the royal purpose. Before his speech at Liverpool, he was pressed to speak in the metropolis :—

'As to my going to London,' he wrote in reply, 'I have twice had my chest rather seriously strained, and I have at this moment a sense of internal fatigue within it which is quite new to me, from the effects of a bad arrangement in the hall at Manchester. Should anything like it be repeated at Liverpool to-morrow I shall not be fit physically to speak for a week, if then. Mentally I have never undergone such an uninterrupted strain as since January 30 of this year. The forming and reforming of the government, the work of framing the bills, and *studying the subject* (which none of the opponents would do), have left me almost stunned, and I have the autumn in prospect with, perhaps, most of the work to do over again if we succeed.'

But this was not to be. The incomparable effort was in vain. The sons of Zeruiah were too hard for him, and England was unconvinced.

The final result was that the ministerialists or liberals of the main body were reduced from 235 to 196, the tories rose from 251 to 316, the dissentient liberals fell to 74, and Mr. Parnell remained at his former strength. In other words, the opponents of the Irish policy of the government were 390, as against 280 in its favour; or a unionist majority of 110. Once more no single party possessed an independent or absolute majority. An important member of the tory party said to a liberal of his acquaintance (July 7), that he was almost sorry the tories had not played the bold game and fought independently of the dissentient liberals. 'But then,' he added, 'we could not have beaten you on the bill, without the compact to spare unionist seats.'

England had returned opponents of the liberal policy in the proportion of two and a half to one against its friends; but Scotland approved in the proportion of three to two, Wales approved by five to one, and Ireland by four and a half to one. Another fact with a warning in it was that, taking the total poll for Great Britain, the liberals had 1,344,000, the seceders 397,000, and the tories 1,041,000. Therefore in contested constituencies the liberals of the main body were only 76,000 behind the forces of tories and seceders combined. Considering the magnitude and surprise of the issue laid before the electors, and in view of the confident prophecies of even some peculiar friends of the policy, that both policy and its authors would be swept out of existence by a universal explosion of national anger and disgust, there was certainly no final and irrevocable verdict in a hostile British majority of no more than four per cent of the votes polled. Apart from electoral figures, coercion loomed large and near at hand, and coercion tried under the new political circumstances that would for the first time attend

it, might well be trusted to do much more than wipe out the margin at the polls. 'There is nothing in the recent defeat,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'to abate the hopes or to modify the anticipations of those who desire to meet the wants and wishes of Ireland.'

VI

The question now before Mr. Gladstone was whether to meet the new parliament or at once to resign. For a short time he wavered, along with an important colleague, and then he and all the rest came round to resignation. The considerations that guided him were these. It is best for Ireland that the party strongest in the new parliament should be at once confronted with its responsibilities. Again, we were bound to consider what would most tend to reunite the liberal party, and it was in opposition that the chances of such reunion would be likely to stand highest, especially in view of coercion which many of the dissidents had refused to contemplate. If he could remodel the bill or frame a new one, that might be a possible ground for endeavouring to make up a majority, but he could not see his way to any such process, though he was ready for certain amendments. Finally, if we remained, an amendment would be moved definitely committing the new House against home rule.

The conclusion was for immediate resignation, and his colleagues were unanimous in assent. The Irish view was different and impossible. Returning from a visit to Ireland I wrote to Mr. Gladstone (July 19) :—

> You may perhaps care to see what —— [not a secular politician] thinks, so I enclose you a conversation between him and ——. He does not show much strength of political judgment, and one can understand why Parnell never takes him into counsel. Parnell, of course, is anxious for us to hold on to the last moment. Our fall will force him without delay to take up a new and difficult line. But his letters to me, especially the last, show a desperate willingness to blink the new parliamentary situation.

Mr. Parnell, in fact, pressed with some importunity that we should meet the new parliament, on the strange view that the result of the election was favourable on general questions, and indecisive only on Irish policy. We were to obtain the balance of supply in an autumn sitting, in January to attack registration reform, and then to dissolve upon that, without making any Irish proposition whatever. This curious suggestion left altogether out of sight the certainty that an amendment referring to Ireland would be at once moved on the Address, such as must beyond all doubt command the whole of the tories and a large part, if not all, of the liberal dissentients. Only one course was possible for the defeated ministers, and they resigned.

On July 30, Mr. Gladstone had his final audience of the Queen, of which he wrote the memorandum following :—

Conversation with the Queen, August 2, 1886.

The conversation at my closing audience on Friday was a singular one, when regarded as the probable last word with the sovereign after fifty-five years of political life, and a good quarter of a century's service rendered to her in office.

The Queen was in good spirits; her manners altogether pleasant. She made me sit at once. Asked after my wife as we began, and sent a kind message to her as we ended. About me personally, I think, her single remark was that I should require some rest. I remember that on a closing audience in 1874 she said she felt sure I might be reckoned upon to support the throne. She did not say anything of the sort to-day. Her mind and opinions have since that day been seriously warped, and I respect her for the scrupulous avoidance of anything which could have seemed to indicate a desire on her part to claim anything in common with me.

Only at three points did the conversation touch upon anything even faintly related to public affairs. . . . The second point was the conclusion of some arrangement for appanages or incomes on behalf of the third generation of the royal house. I agreed that there ought at a suitable time to be a committee on this subject, as had been settled some time back, she observing that the recent circumstances had made the time unsuitable. I did not offer any suggestion as to the grounds of the affair, but said it seemed to me possible to try some plan under which intended marriages should be communicated without forcing a reply from the Houses. Also I agreed that the amounts were not excessive. I did not pretend to have a solution ready: but said it would, of course, be the duty of the government to submit a plan to the committee. The third matter was trivial: a question or two from her on the dates and proceedings connected with the meeting. The rest of the conversation, not a very long one, was filled up with nothings. It is rather melancholy. But on neither side, given the conditions, could it well be helped.

On the following day she wrote a letter, making it evident, that so far as Ireland was concerned, she could not trust herself to say what she wanted to say. . . .

Among the hundreds of letters that reached him every week was one from an evangelical lady of known piety, enclosing him a form of prayer that had been issued against home rule. His acknowledgment (July 27) shows none of the impatience of the baffled statesman:—

I thank you much for your note; and though I greatly deplored the issue, and the ideas of the prayer in question, yet, from the moment when I heard it was your composition, I knew perfectly well that it was written in entire good faith, and had no relation to political controversy in the ordinary sense. I cannot but think that, in bringing the subject of Irish intolerance before the Almighty Father, we ought to have some regard to the fact that down to the present day, as between the two religions, the offence has been in the proportion of perhaps a hundred to one on the protestant side, and the suffering by it on the Roman side. At the present hour, I am pained to express my belief that there is far more of intolerance in action from so-called protestants against Roman catholics, than from Roman catholics against protestants. It is a

great satisfaction to agree with you, as I feel confident that I must do, in the conviction that of prayers we cannot possibly have too much in this great matter, and for my own part I heartily desire that, unless the policy I am proposing be for the honour of God and the good of His creatures, it may be trampled under foot and broken into dust. Of your most charitable thoughts and feelings towards me I am deeply sensible, and I remain with hearty regard.

As he wrote at this time to R. H. Hutton (July 2), one of the choice spirits of our age, 'Rely upon it, I can never quarrel with you or with Bright. What vexes me is when differences disclose baseness, which sometimes happens.'

Book X

(1886–1898)

CHAPTER I

THE MORROW OF DEFEAT

(1886–1887)

Charity rendereth a man truly great, enlarging his mind into a vast circumference, and to a capacity nearly infinite; so that it by a general care doth reach all things, by an universal affection doth embrace and grace the world. . . . Even a spark of it in generosity of dealing breedeth admiration; a glimpse of it in formal courtesy of behaviour procureth much esteem, being deemed to accomplish and adorn a man.—Barrow.

After the rejection of his Irish policy in the summer of 1886, Mr. Gladstone had a period of six years before him, the life of the new parliament. Strangely dramatic years they were, in some respects unique in our later history. The party schism among liberals grew deeper and wider. The union between tories and seceders became consolidated and final. The alternative policy of coercion was passed through parliament in an extreme form and with violent strain on the legislative machinery, and it was carried out in Ireland in a fashion that pricked the consciences of many thousands of voters who had resisted the proposals of 1886. A fierce storm rent the Irish phalanx in two, and its leader vanished from the field where for sixteen years he had fought so bold and uncompromising a fight. During this period Mr. Gladstone stood in the most trying of all the varied positions of his life, and without flinching he confronted it in the strong faith that the national honour as well as the assuagement of the inveterate Irish wound in the flank of his country, were the issues at stake.

This intense pre-occupation in the political struggle did not for a single week impair his other interests, nor stay his ceaseless activity in controversies that were not touched by politics. Not even now, when the great cause to which he had so daringly committed himself was in decisive issue, could he

allow it to dull or sever what had been the standing concerns of life and thought to him for so long a span of years. As from his youth up, so now behind the man of public action was the diligent, eager, watchful student, churchman, apologist, divine. And what is curious and delightful is that he never set a more admirable example of the tone and temper in which literary and religious controversy should be conducted, than in these years when in politics exasperation was at its worst. It was about this time that he wrote:—'Certainly one of the lessons life has taught me is that where there is known to be a common object, the pursuit of truth, there should also be a studious desire to interpret the adversary in the best sense his words will fairly bear; to avoid whatever widens the breach; and to make the most of whatever tends to narrow it. These I hold to be part of the laws of knightly tournament.' And to these laws he sedulously conformed. Perhaps at some happy time before the day of judgment they may be transferred from the tournament to the battle-fields of philosophy, criticism, and even politics.

II

After the defeat in which his tremendous labours had for the moment ended, he made his way to what was to him the most congenial atmosphere in the world, to the company of Döllinger and Acton, at Tegernsee in Bavaria. 'Tegernsee,' Lord Acton wrote to me (Sept. 7), 'is an out-of-the-way place, peaceful and silent, and as there is a good library in the house, I have taken some care of his mind, leading in the direction of little French comedies, and away from the tragedy of existence. It has done him good, and he has just started with Döllinger to climb a high mountain in the neighbourhood.'

To Mrs. Gladstone.

Tegernsee, Aug. 28, 1886.—We found Döllinger reading in the garden. The course of his life is quite unchanged. His constitution does not appear at all to have given way. He beats me utterly in standing, but that is not saying much, as it never was one of my gifts; and he is not conscious (eighty-seven last February) of any difficulty with the heart in going up hill. His deafness has increased materially, but not so that he cannot carry on very well conversation with a single person. We have talked much together even on disestablishment which he detests, and Ireland as to which he is very apprehensive, but he never seems to shut up his mind by prejudice. I had a good excuse for giving him my pamphlet,[1] but I do not know whether he will tell us what he thinks of it. He was reading it this morning. He rises at six and breakfasts alone. Makes a *good* dinner at two and has nothing more till the next morning. He does not appear after dark. On the whole one sees no reason why he should not last for several years yet.

[1] On the Irish Question—'The History of an Idea and the Lesson of the Elections,' a fifty-page pamphlet prepared before leaving England.

'When Dr. Döllinger was eighty-seven,' Mr. Gladstone wrote later, 'he walked with me seven miles across the hill that separates the Tegernsee from the next valley to the eastward. At that time he began to find his sleep subject to occasional interruptions, and he had armed himself against them by committing to memory the first three books of the *Odyssey* for recital.'[1] Of Mr. Gladstone Döllinger had said in 1885, 'I have known Gladstone for thirty years, and would stand security for him any day; his character is a very fine one, and he possesses a rare capability for work. I differ from him in his political views on many points, and it is difficult to convince him, for he is clad in triple steel.'[2]

Another high personage in the Roman catholic world sent him letters through Acton, affectionately written and with signs of serious as well as sympathising study of his Irish policy. A little later (Sept. 21) Mr. Gladstone writes to his wife at Hawarden:—

> Bishop Strossmayer may make a journey all the way to Hawarden, and it seems that Acton may even accompany him, which would make it much more manageable. His coming would be a great compliment, and cannot be discouraged or refused. It would, however, be a serious affair, for he speaks no language with which as a spoken tongue we are familiar, his great cards being Slavonic and Latin. Unfortunately I have a very great increase of difficulty in *hearing* the words in foreign tongues, a difficulty which I hope has hardly begun with you as yet.

Like a good host, Lord Acton kept politics out of his way as well as he could, but some letter of mine 'set him on fire, and he is full of ——'s blunder and of Parnell's bill.' Parliamentary duty was always a sting to him, and by September 20 he was back in the House of Commons, speaking on the Tenants Relief (Ireland) bill. Then to the temple of peace at Hawarden for the rest of the year, to read the *Iliad* 'for the twenty-fifth or thirtieth time, and every time richer and more glorious than before'; to write elaborately on Homeric topics; to receive a good many visitors; and to compose the admirable article on Tennyson's second *Locksley Hall*. On this last let us pause for an instant. The moment was hardly one in which, from a man of nature less great and powerful than Mr. Gladstone, we should have counted on a buoyant vindication of the spirit of his time. He had just been roughly repulsed in the boldest enterprise of his career; his name was a target for infinite obloquy; his motives were largely denounced as of the basest; the conflict into which he had plunged and from which he could not withdraw was hard; friends had turned away from him; he was old; the issue was dubious and dark. Yet the personal, or even what to him were the national discomfitures of the hour, were not allowed to blot the sun out of the heavens His whole

[1] *Speaker*, Jan. 1, 1890.
[2] *Conversations of Döllinger*. By L. von Köbell, pp. 100, 102.

soul rose in challenge against the tragic tones of Tennyson's poem, as he recalled the solid tale of the vast improvements, the enormous mitigation of the sorrows and burdens of mankind, that had been effected in the land by public opinion and public authority, operative in the exhilarating sphere of self-government during the sixty years between the first and second *Locksley Hall*.

The sum of the matter seems to be that upon the whole, and in a degree, we who lived fifty, sixty, seventy years back, and are living now, have lived into a gentler time; that the public conscience has grown more tender, as indeed was very needful; and that in matters of practice, at sight of evils formerly regarded with indifference or even connivance, it now not only winces but rebels; that upon the whole the race has been reaping, and not scattering; earning and not wasting; and that without its being said that the old Prophet is wrong, it may be said that the young Prophet was unquestionably right.

Here is the way in which a man of noble heart and high vision as of a circling eagle, transcends his individual chagrins. All this optimism was the natural vein of a statesman who had lived a long life of effort in persuading opinion in so many regions, in overcoming difficulty upon difficulty, in content with a small reform where men would not let him achieve a great one, in patching where he could not build anew, in unquenchable faith, hope, patience, endeavour. Mr. Gladstone knew as well as Tennyson that 'every blessing has its drawbacks, and every age its dangers'; he was as sensitive as Tennyson or Ruskin or any of them, to the implacable tragedy of industrial civilisation—the city children 'blackening soul and sense in city slime,' progress halting on palsied feet 'among the glooming alleys,' crime and hunger casting maidens on the street, and all the other recesses of human life depicted by the poetic prophet in his sombre hours. But the triumphs of the past inspired confidence in victories for the future, and meanwhile he thought it well to remind Englishmen that 'their country is still young as well as old, and that in these latest days it has not been unworthy of itself.'[1]

On his birthday he enters in his diary:—

Dec. 29, 1886.—This day in its outer experience recalls the Scotch usage which would say, 'terrible pleasant.' In spite of the ruin of telegraph wires by snow, my letters and postal arrivals of to-day have much exceeded those of last year. Even my share of the reading was very heavy. The day was gone before it seemed to have begun, all amidst stir and festivity. The estimate was nine hundred arrivals. O for a birthday of recollection. It is long since I have had one. There is so much to say on the soul's history, but bracing is necessary to say it, as it is for reading Dante. It has been a year of shock and strain. I think a year of some progress; but of greater absorption in interests which,

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, January 1887. See also speech at Hawarden, on the Queen's Reign, August 30, 1887. The reader will remember Mr. Gladstone's contrast between poet and active statesman at Kirkwall in 1883.

though profoundly human, are quite off the line of an old man's direct preparation for passing the River of Death. I have not had a chance given me of creeping from this whirlpool, for I cannot abandon a cause which is so evidently that of my fellow-men, and in which a particular part seems to be assigned to me. Therefore am I not disturbed 'though the hills be carried into the middle of the sea.'

III

To Lord Acton.

Hawarden, Jan. 13, 1887.—It is with much pleasure that I read your estimate of Chamberlain. His character is remarkable, as are in a very high degree his talents. It is one of my common sayings that to me characters of the political class are the most mysterious of all I meet, so that I am obliged to travel the road of life surrounded by an immense number of judgments more or less in suspense, and getting on for practical purposes as well as I can.

I have with a clear mind and conscience not only assented to but promoted the present conferences, and I had laboured in that sense long before Mr. Chamberlain made his speech at Birmingham. It will surprise as well as grieve me if they do harm; if indeed they do not do some little good. Large and final arrangements, it would be rash I think to expect.

The tide is flowing, though perhaps not rapidly, in our favour. Without our lifting a finger, a crumbling process has begun in both the opposite parties. 'In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength' is a blessed maxim, often applicable to temporals as well as spirituals. I have indeed one temptation to haste, namely, that the hour may come for me to say farewell and claim my retirement; but inasmuch as I remain *in situ* for the Irish question only, I cannot be so foolish as to allow myself to ruin by precipitancy my own purpose. Though I am writing a paper on the Irish question for Mr. Knowles, it is no trumpet-blast, but is meant to fill and turn to account a season of comparative quietude.

The death of Iddesleigh has shocked and saddened us all. He was full of excellent qualities, but had not the backbone and strength of fibre necessary to restore the tone of a party demoralised by his former leader. In gentleness, temper, sacrifice of himself to the common purpose of his friends, knowledge, quickness of perception, general integrity of intention, freedom from personal aims, he was admirable. . . . I have been constantly struggling to vindicate a portion of my time for the pursuits I want to follow, but with very little success indeed. Some rudiments of Olympian religion have partially taken shape. I have a paper ready for Knowles probably in his March number on the Poseidon of Homer, a most curious and exotic personage. . . . Williams and Norgate got me the books I wanted, but alack for the time to read them! In addition to want of time, I have to deplore my slowness in reading, declining sight, and declining memory; all very serious affairs for one who has such singular reason to be thankful as to general health and strength.

I wish I could acknowledge duly or pay even in part your unsparing, untiring kindness in the discharge of your engagements as 'Cook.' Come early to England—and stay long. We will try what we can to bind you.

A few months later, he added to his multifarious exercises in criticism and controversy, a performance that attracted especial attention.[1] 'Mamma and I,' he wrote to Mrs. Drew, 'are each of us still separately engaged in a death-grapple with *Robert Elsmere*. I complained of some of the novels you gave me to read as too stiff, but they are nothing to this. It is wholly out of the common order. At present I regard with doubt and dread the idea of doing anything on it, but cannot yet be sure whether your observations will be verified or not. In any case it is a tremendous book.' And on April 1 (1888), he wrote, 'By hard work I have finished and am correcting my article on *Robert Elsmere*. It is rather stiff work. I have had two letters from her. She is much to be liked personally, but is a fruit, I think, of what must be called Arnoldism.'

To Lord Acton.

Aston Clinton, Tring, Easter Day, April 1, '88.—I do not like to let too long a time elapse without some note of intercourse, even though that season approaches which brings you back to the shores of your country. Were you here I should have much to say on many things; but I will now speak, or first speak, of what is uppermost, and would, if a mind is like a portmanteau, be taken or tumble out first.

You perhaps have not heard of *Robert Elsmere*, for I find without surprise, that it makes its way slowly into public notice. It is not far from twice the length of an ordinary novel; and the labour and effort of reading it all, I should say, sixfold; while one could no more stop in it than in reading Thucydides. The idea of the book, perhaps of the writer, appears to be a movement of retreat from Christianity upon Theism: a Theism with a Christ glorified, always in the human sense, but beyond the ordinary measure. It is worked out through the medium of a being—one ought to say a character, but I withhold the word, for there is no sufficient substratum of character to uphold the qualities—gifted with much intellectual subtlety and readiness, and almost every conceivable moral excellence. He finds vent in an energetic attempt to carry his new gospel among the skilled artisans of London, whom the writer apparently considers as supplying the *norm* for all right human judgment. He has extraordinary success, establishes a new church under the name of the new Christian brotherhood, kills himself with overwork, but leaves his project flourishing in a certain 'Elgood Street.' It is in fact (like the Salvation Army) a new Kirche der Zukunft.

I am always inclined to consider this Theism as among the least defensible of the positions alternative to Christianity. Robert Elsmere, who has been a parish clergyman, is upset entirely, as it appears, by the difficulty of accepting miracles, and by the suggestion that the existing Christianity grew up in an age specially predisposed to them.

I want as usual to betray you into helping the lame dog over the stile; and I should like to know whether you would think me violently wrong in holding that the period of the Advent was a period when the appetite for, or disposition to, the supernatural was declining and decaying; that in the region of human thought, speculation was strong

[1] *Robert Elsmere: the Battle of Belief* (1888). Republished from the *Nineteenth Century* in *Later Gleanings*, 1898.

and scepticism advancing; that if our Lord were a mere man, armed only with human means, His whereabouts was in this and many other ways misplaced by Providence; that the gospels and the New Testament must have much else besides miracle torn out of them, in order to get us down to the *caput mortuum* of Elgood Street. This very remarkable work is in effect identical with the poor, thin, ineffectual production published with some arrogance by the Duke of Somerset, which found a quack remedy for difficulties in what he considered the impregnable citadel of belief in God.

Knowles has brought this book before me, and being as strong as it is strange, it cannot perish still-born. I am tossed about with doubt as to writing upon it.

To Lord Acton.

Oxford, April 8, '88.—I am grateful for your most interesting letter which contains very valuable warnings. On the other side is copied what I have written on two of the points raised by the book. Have I said too much of the Academy? I have spoken only of the first century. You refer to (apparently) about 250 A.D. as a time of great progress? But I was astonished on first reading the census of Christian clergy in Rome *temp.* St. Cyprian, it was so slender. I am not certain, but does not Beugnot estimate the Christians before Constantine's conversion, in the west at one-tenth of the population? Mrs. T. Arnold died yesterday here. Mrs. Ward had been summoned and she is coming to see me this evening. It is a very singular phase of the controversy which she has opened. When do you *repatriate*?

I am afraid that my kindness to the Positivists amounts only to a comparative approval of their not dropping the great human tradition out of view; *plus* a very high appreciation of the personal qualities of our friend ——.

To Lord Acton.

Dollis Hill, May 13, '88.—Your last letter was one of extreme interest. It raised such a multitude of points, after your perusal of my article on R. Elsmere, as to stimulate in the highest degree my curiosity to know how far you would carry into propositions, the ideas which you for the most part obliquely put forward. I gave the letter to Mary, who paid us a flying visit in London, that she might take it to Hawarden for full digestion. For myself I feed upon the hope that when (when?) you come back to England we may go over the points, and I may reap further benefits from your knowledge. I will not now attempt anything of the kind. But I will say this generally, that I am not so much oppressed as you appear to be, with the notion that great difficulties have been imported by the researches of scientists into the religious and theological argument. As respects cosmogony and *geogony*, the Scripture has, I think, taken much benefit from them. Whatever be the date of the early books, Pentateuch or Hexateuch in their present *edition*, the Assyriological investigations seem to me to have fortified and accredited their substance by producing similar traditions in variant forms inferior to the Mosaic forms, and tending to throw them back to a higher antiquity, a fountainhead nearer the source. Then there is the great chapter of the Dispersal: which Renan (I think) treats as exhibiting the marvellous genius (!) of the Jews. As to unbroken sequences in the physical order, they do not trouble me, because we have to do

not with the natural but the moral order, and over this science, or as I call it natural science, does not wave her sceptre. It is no small matter, again (if so it be, as I suppose), that, after warring for a century against miracle as unsustained by experience, the assailants should now have to abandon that ground, stand only upon sequence, and controvert the great facts of the New Testament only by raising to an extravagant and unnatural height the demands made under the law of testimony in order to [justify] a rational belief. One admission has to be made, that death did not come into the world by sin, namely the sin of Adam, and this sits inconveniently by the declaration of Saint Paul.

Mrs. Ward wrote to thank me for the tone of my article. Her first intention was to make some reply in the *Nineteenth Century* itself. It appears that —— advised her not to do it. But Knowles told me that he was labouring to bring her up to the scratch again. There, I said, you show the cloven foot; you want to keep the *Nineteenth Century* pot boiling.

I own that your reasons for not being in England did not appear to me cogent, but it would be impertinent to make myself a judge of them. The worst of it was that you did not name *any* date. But I must assume that you are coming; and surely the time cannot now be far. Among other things, I want to speak with you about French novels, a subject on which there has for me been quite recently cast a most lurid light.

Acton's letters in reply may have convinced Mr. Gladstone that there were depths in this supreme controversy that he had hardly sounded; and adversaria that he might have mocked from a professor of the school or schools of unbelief, he could not in his inner mind make light of, when coming from the pen of a catholic believer. Before and after the article on *Robert Elsmere* appeared, Acton, the student with his vast historic knowledge and his deep penetrating gaze, warned the impassioned critic of some historic point overstated or understated, some dangerous breach left all unguarded, some lack of nicety in definition. Acton's letters will one day see the light, and the reader may then know how candidly Mr. Gladstone was admonished as to the excess of his description of the moral action of Christianity; as to the risk of sending modern questions to ancient answers, for the apologists of an age can only meet the difficulties of their age; that there are leaps and bounds in the history of thought; how well did Newman once say that in theology you have to meet questions that the Fathers could hardly have been made to understand; how if you go to St. Thomas or Leibnitz or Paley for rescue from Hegel or Haeckel your apologetics will be a record of disaster. You insist broadly, says Acton, on belief in the divine nature of Christ as the soul, substance, and creative force of Christian religion; you assign to it very much of the good the church has done; all this with little or no qualification or drawback from the other side:—

Enter Martineau or Stephen or —— (unattached), and loq.:—Is this

the final judgment of the chief of liberals? the pontiff of a church whose fathers are the later Milton and the later Penn, Locke, Bayle, Toland, Franklin, Turgot, Adam Smith, Washington, Jefferson, Bentham, Dugald Stewart, Romilly, Tocqueville, Channing, Macaulay, Mill? These men and others like them disbelieved that doctrine established freedom, and they undid the work of orthodox Christianity, they swept away that appalling edifice of intolerance, tyranny, cruelty, which believers in Christ built up to perpetuate their belief.

The philosophy of liberal history, Acton proceeds, which has to acknowledge the invaluable services of early Christianity, feels the anti-liberal and anti-social action of later Christianity, before the rise of the sects that rejected, some of them the divinity of Christ; others, the institutions of the church erected upon it. Liberalism if it admits these things as indifferent, surrenders its own *raison d'être*, and ceases to strive for an ethical cause. If the doctrine of Torquemada make us condone his morality, there can be no public right and no wrong, no political sin, no secular cause to die for. So it might be said that—

You do not work really from the principle of liberalism, but from the cognate, though distinct principles of democracy, nationality, progress, etc. To some extent, I fear, you will estrange valued friends, not assuredly by any expression of theological belief, but by seeming to ignore the great central problem of Christian politics. If I had to put my own doubts, instead of the average liberal's, I should state the case in other words, but not altogether differently.[1]

[1] May 2, 1888.

CHAPTER II

THE ALTERNATIVE POLICY IN ACT

(*1886–1888*)

Those who come over hither to us from England, and some weak people among ourselves, whenever in discourse we make mention of liberty and property, shake their heads, and tell us that 'Ireland is a depending kingdom,' as if they would seem by this phrase to intend, that the people of Ireland are in some state of slavery or dependence different from those of England.—JONATHAN SWIFT.

IN the ministry that succeeded Mr. Gladstone in 1886, Sir Michael Hicks Beach undertook for the second time the office of Irish secretary, while Lord Randolph Churchill filled his place at the exchequer and as leader of the House. The new Irish policy was to open with the despatch of a distinguished soldier to put down moonlighters in Kerry; the creation of one royal commission under Lord Cowper, to inquire into land rents and land purchase; and another to inquire into the country's material resources. The two commissions were well-established ways of marking time. As for Irish industries and Irish resources, a committee of the House of Commons had made a report in a blue-book of a thousand pages only a year before. On Irish land there had been a grand commission in 1880, and a committee of the House of Lords in 1882-3. The latest Purchase Act was hardly yet a year old. Then to commission a general to hunt down little handfuls of peasants who with blackened faces and rude fire-arms crept stealthily in the dead of night round lonely cabins in the remote hillsides and glens of Kerry, was hardly more sensible than it would be to send a squadron of life-guards to catch pickpockets in a London slum.

A question that exercised Mr. Gladstone at least as sharply as the proceedings of ministers, was the attitude to be taken by those who had quitted him, ejected him in the short parliament of 1886, and fought the election against him. We have seen how much controversy arose long years before as to the question whereabouts in the House of Commons the Peelites should take their seats.[1] The same perplexity now confronted

[1] See vol. i. p. 814.

the liberals who did not agree with Mr. Gladstone upon Irish government. Lord Hartington wrote to him, and here is his reply :—

August 2, 1886.—I fully appreciate the feeling which has prompted your letter, and I admit the reality of the difficulties you describe. It is also clear, I think, that so far as title to places on the front opposition bench is concerned, your right to them is identical with ours. I am afraid, however, that I cannot materially contribute to relieve you from embarrassment. The choice of a seat is more or less the choice of a symbol ; and I have no such acquaintance with your political views and intentions, as could alone enable me to judge what materials I have before me for making an answer to your inquiry. For my own part, I earnestly desire, subject to the paramount exigencies of the Irish question, to promote in every way the reunion of the liberal party ; a desire in which I earnestly trust that you participate. And I certainly could not directly or indirectly dissuade you from any step which you may be inclined to take, and which may appear to you to have a tendency in any measure to promote that end.

A singular event occurred at the end of the year (1886), that produced an important change in the relations of this group of liberals to the government that they had placed and maintained in power. Lord Randolph, the young minister who with such extraordinary rapidity had risen to ascendency in the councils of the government, suddenly in a fatal moment of miscalculation or caprice resigned (Dec. 23). Political suicide is not easy to a man with energy and resolution, but this was one of the rare cases. In a situation so strangely unstable and irregular, with an administration resting on the support of a section sitting on benches opposite, and still declaring every day that they adhered to old liberal principles and had no wish to sever old party ties, the withdrawal of Lord Randolph Churchill created boundless perturbation. It was one of those exquisite moments in which excited politicians enjoy the ineffable sensation that the end of the world has come. Everything seemed possible. Lord Hartington was summoned from the shores of the Mediterranean, but being by temperament incredulous of all vast elemental convulsions, he took his time. On his return he declined Lord Salisbury's offer to make way for him as head of the government. The glitter of the prize might have tempted a man of schoolboy ambition, but Lord Hartington was too experienced in affairs not to know that to be head of a group that held the balance was, under such equivocal circumstances, far the more substantial and commanding position of the two. Mr. Goschen's case was different, and by taking the vacant post at the exchequer he saved the prime minister from the necessity of going back under Lord Randolph's yoke. As it happened, all this gave a shake to both of the unionist wings. The ominous clouds of coercion were sailing slowly but discernibly along the horizon, and this

made men in the unionist camp still more restless and uneasy. Mr. Chamberlain, on the very day of the announcement of the Churchill resignation, had made a speech that was taken to hold out an olive branch to his old friends. Sir William Harcourt, ever holding stoutly in fair weather and in foul to the party ship, thought the break-up of a great political combination to be so immense an evil, as to call for almost any sacrifices to prevent it. He instantly wrote to Birmingham to express his desire to co-operate in re-union, and in the course of a few days five members of the original liberal cabinet of 1886 met at his house in what was known as the Round Table Conference.[1]

A letter of Mr. Gladstone's to me puts some of his views on the situation created by the retirement of Lord Randolph:—

Hawarden, Christmas Day, 1886.—Between Christmas services, a flood of cards and congratulations for the season, and many interesting letters, I am drowned in work to-day, having just at 1¼ P.M. ascertained what my letters *are*. So forgive me if, first thanking you very much for yours, I deal with some points rather abruptly.

1. Churchill has committed an outrage as against the Queen, and also the prime minister, in the method of resigning and making known his resignation. This, of course, they will work against him. 2. He is also entirely wrong in supposing that the finance minister has any ruling authority on the great estimates of defence. If he had, he would be the master of the country. But although he has no right to demand the concurrence of his colleagues in his view of the estimates, he has a rather special right, because these do so much towards determining budget and taxation, to indicate his own views by resignation. I have repeatedly fought estimates to the extremity, with an intention of resigning in *case*. But to send in a resignation makes it impossible for his colleagues as men of honour to recede. 3. I think one of his best points is that he had made before taking office recent and formal declarations on behalf of economy, of which his colleagues must be taken to have been cognisant, and Salisbury in particular. He may plead that he could not reduce these all at once to zero. 4. Cannot something be done, without reference to the holes that may be picked, to give him some support as a champion of economy? This talk about the continental war, I for one regard as pure nonsense when aimed at magnifying our estimates.

5. With regard to Hartington. What he will do I know not, and our wishes could have no weight with him. . . . The position is one of such difficulty for H. that I am very sorry for him, though it was never more true that he who makes his own bed in a certain way must lie in it. Chamberlain's speech hits him very hard in case of acceptance. I take it for granted that he will not accept to sit among thirteen tories, but will have to demand an entry by force, *i.e.* with three or four friends. To accept upon that footing would, I think, be the logical consequence of all he has said and done since April. In logic, he ought to go forward, *or*, as Chamberlain has done, backward. The Queen will, I have no doubt, be brought to bear upon him, and the nine-tenths of his order. If the Irish question rules all others, all he has to consider is whether he (properly

[1] Sir W. Harcourt, Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Herschell, Sir George Trevelyan, and myself.

flanked) can serve his view of the Irish question. But with this logic we have nothing to do. The question for us also is (I think), what is best for our view of the Irish question? I am tempted to wish that he should accept; it would clear the ground. But I do not yet see my way with certainty.

6. With regard to Chamberlain. From what has already passed between us you know that, apart from the new situation and from his declaration, I was very desirous that everything honourable should be done to conciliate and soothe. Unquestionably his speech is a new fact of great weight. He is again a liberal, *quand même*, and will not on all points (as good old Joe Hume used to say) swear black is white for the sake of his views on Ireland. We ought not to waste this new fact, but take careful account of it. On the other hand, I think he will see that the moment for taking account of it has not come. Clearly the first thing is to see who are the government. When we see this, we shall also know something of its colour and intentions. I do not think Randolph can go back. He would go back at a heavy discount. If he wants to minimise, the only way I see is that he should isolate his vote on the estimates, form no *clique*, and proclaim strong support in Irish matters and general policy. Thus he might pave a roundabout road of return. . . . In *many* things Goschen is more of a liberal than Hartington, and he would carry with him next to nobody.

7. On the whole, I rejoice to think that, come what may, this affair will really affect progress in the Irish question.

A happy Christmas to you. It will be happier than that of the ministers.

Mr. Gladstone gave the Round Table his blessing, his 'general idea being that he had better meddle as little as possible with the conference, and retain a free hand.' Lord Hartington would neither join the conference, nor deny that he thought it premature. While negotiation was going on, he said, somebody must stay at home, guard the position, and keep a watch on the movements of the enemy, and this duty was his. In truth, after encouraging or pressing Mr. Goschen to join the government, it was obviously impossible to do anything that would look like desertion either of him or of them. On the other side, both English liberals and Irish nationalists were equally uneasy lest the unity of the party should be bought by the sacrifice of fundamentals. The conference was denounced from this quarter as an attempt to find a compromise that would help a few men sitting on the fence to salve 'their consciences at the expense of a nation's rights.' Such remarks are worth quoting, to illustrate the temper of the rank and file. Mr. Parnell, though alive to the truth that when people go into a conference it usually means that they are ready to give up something, was thoroughly awake to the satisfactory significance of the Birmingham overtures.

Things at the round table for some time went smoothly enough. Mr. Chamberlain gradually advanced the whole length. He publicly committed himself to the expediency of establishing some kind of legislative authority in Dublin in accordance with

Mr. Gladstone's principle, with a preference in his own mind for a plan on the lines of Canada. This he followed up, also in public, by the admission that of course the Irish legislature must be allowed to organize their own form of executive government, either by an imitation on a small scale of all that goes on at Westminster and Whitehall, or in whatever other shape they might think proper.[1] To assent to an Irish legislature for such affairs as parliament might determine to be distinctively Irish, with an executive responsible to it, was to accept the party credo on the subject. Then the surface became mysteriously ruffled. Language was used by some of the plenipotentiaries in public, of which each side in turn complained as inconsistent with conciliatory negotiation in private. At last on the very day on which the provisional result of the conference was laid before Mr. Gladstone, there appeared in a print called the *Baptist*[2] an article from Mr. Chamberlain, containing an ardent plea for the disestablishment of the Welsh church, but warning the Welshmen that they and the Scotch crofters and the English labourers, thirty-two millions of people, must all go without much-needed legislation because three millions were disloyal, while nearly six hundred members of parliament would be reduced to forced inactivity, because some eighty delegates, representing the policy and receiving the pay of the Chicago convention, were determined to obstruct all business until their demands had been conceded. Men naturally asked what was the use of continuing a discussion, when one party to it was attacking in this peremptory fashion the very persons and the policy that in private he was supposed to accept. Mr. Gladstone showed no implacability. Viewing the actual character of the *Baptist* letter, he said to Sir. W. Harcourt, 'I am inclined to think we can hardly do more now, than to say we fear it has interposed an unexpected obstacle in the way of any attempt at this moment to sum up the result of your communications, which we should otherwise hopefully have done; but on the other hand we are unwilling that so much ground apparently gained should be lost, that a little time may soften or remove the present ruffling of the surface, and that we are quite willing that the subject should stand over for resumption at a convenient season.'

The resumption never happened. Two or three weeks later, Mr. Chamberlain announced that he did not intend to return to the round table.[3] No other serious and formal attempt was ever made on either side to prevent the liberal unionists from

1 See speeches at Hawick, Jan. 22, and at Birmingham, Jan. 29, 1887.

2 *Baptist* article, in *Times*, Feb. 25, 1887.

3 If anybody should ever wish further to disinter the history of this fruitless episode, he will find all the details in a speech by Sir William Harcourt at Derby, Feb. 27, 1889. See also Sir G. O. Trevelyan, *Times*, July 26, 1887, Mr. Chamberlain's letter to Mr. Evelyn Ashley, *Times*, July 29, 1887, and a speech of my own at Wolverhampton, April 19, 1887.

hardening into a separate species. When they became accomplices in coercion, they cut off the chances of re-union. Coercion was the key to the new situation. Just as at the beginning of 1886, the announcement of it by the tory government marked the parting of the ways, so was it now.

II

We must now with reasonable cheerfulness turn our faces back towards Ireland. On the day of his return from Ireland (August 17, 1886) Mr. Parnell told me that he was quite sure that rents could not be paid in the coming winter, and if the country was to be kept quiet, the government would have to do something. He hoped that they would do something; otherwise there would be disturbance, and that he did not want. He had made up his mind that his interests would be best served by a quiet winter. For one thing he knew that disturbance would be followed by coercion, and he knew and often said that of course strong coercion must always in the long run win the day, little as the victory might be worth. For another thing he apprehended that disturbance might frighten away his new political allies in Great Britain, and destroy the combination which he had so dexterously built up. This was now a dominant element with him. He desired definitely that the next stage of his movement should be in the largest sense political and not agrarian. He brought two or three sets of proposals in this sense before the House, and finally produced a Tenants Relief bill. It was not brilliantly framed. For in truth it is not in human nature, either Irish or any other, to labour the framing of a bill which has no chance of being seriously considered.

The golden secret of Irish government was always to begin by trying to find all possible points for disagreement with anything that Mr. Parnell said or proposed, instead of seeking whether what he said or proposed might not furnish a basis for agreement. The conciliatory tone was soon over, and the Parnell bill was thrown out. The Irish secretary denounced it as permanently upsetting the settlement of 1881, as giving a death-blow to purchase, and as produced without the proof of any real grounds for a general reduction in judicial rents. Whatever else he did, said Sir Michael Hicks Beach, he would never agree to govern Ireland by a policy of blackmail.[1]

A serious movement followed the failure of the government to grapple with arrears of rent. The policy known as the plan of campaign was launched. The plan of campaign was this. The tenants of a given estate agreed with one another what abatement they thought just in the current half-year's rent. This in a body they proffered to landlord or agent. If it was refused as payment in full, they handed the money to a

[1] *Hansard*, 309, Sept. 21, 1886.

managing committee, and the committee deposited it with some person in whom they had confidence, to be used for the purpose of the struggle.[1] That such proceeding constituted an unlawful conspiracy nobody doubts, any more than it can be doubted that before the Act of 1875 every trade combination of a like kind in this island was a conspiracy.

At any early stage the Irish leader gave his opinion to the present writer:—

Dec. 7, 1886.—Mr. Parnell called, looking very ill and worn. He wished to know what I thought of the effect of the plan of campaign upon public opinion. 'If you mean in Ireland,' I said, 'of course I have no view, and it would be worth nothing if I had. In England, the effect is wholly bad; it offends almost more even than outrages.' He said he had been very ill and had taken no part, so that he stands free and uncommitted. He was anxious to have it fully understood that the fixed point in his tactics is to maintain the alliance with the English liberals. He referred with much bitterness, and very justifiable too, to the fact that when Ireland seemed to be quiet some short time back, the government had at once begun to draw away from all their promises of remedial legislation. If now rents were paid, meetings abandoned, and newspapers moderated, the same thing would happen over again as usual. However, he would send for a certain one of his lieutenants, and would press for an immediate cessation of the violent speeches.

December 12.—Mr. Parnell came, and we had a prolonged conversation. The lieutenant had come over, and had defended the plan of campaign. Mr. Parnell persevered in his dissent and disapproval, and they parted with the understanding that the meetings should be dropped, and the movement calmed as much as could be. I told him that I had heard from Mr. Gladstone, and that he could not possibly show any tolerance for illegalities.

That his opponents should call upon Mr. Gladstone to denounce the plan of campaign and cut himself off from its authors, was to be expected. They made the most of it. But he was the last man to be turned aside from the prosecution of a policy that he deemed of overwhelming moment, by any minor currents. Immediately after the election, Mr. Parnell had been informed of his view that it would be a mistake for English and Irish to aim at uniform action in parliament. Motives could not be at all points the same. Liberals were bound to keep in view (next to what the Irish question might require) the reunion of the liberal party. The Irish were bound to have special regard to the opinion and circumstances of Ireland. Common action up to a certain degree would arise from the necessities of the position. Such was Mr. Gladstone's view. He was bent on bringing a revolutionary movement to what he confidently anticipated would be a good end; to allow a passing phase of that movement to divert him would be to abandon his own foundations. No reformer is fit for his

[1] See *United Ireland*, Oct. 23, 1886.

task who suffers himself to be frightened off by the excesses of an extreme wing.

In reply to my account of the conversation with Mr. Parnell, he wrote to me :—

Hawarden, December 8, 1886.—I have received your very clear statement and reply in much haste for the post—making the same request as yours for a return. I am glad to find the —— speech is likely to be neutralised, I hope effectually. It was really very bad. I am glad you write to ——. 2. As to the campaign in Ireland, I do not at present feel the force of Hartington's appeal to me to speak out. I do not recollect that he ever spoke out about Churchill, of whom he is for the time the enthusiastic follower.[1] 3. But all I say and do must be kept apart from the slightest countenance direct or indirect to illegality. We too suffer under the power of the landlord, but we cannot adopt this as a method of breaking it. 4. I am glad you opened the question of intermediate measures. . . . 5. Upon the whole I suppose he sees he cannot have countenance from us in the plan of campaign. The question rather is how much disavowal. I have contradicted a tory figment in Glasgow that I had approved.

At a later date (September 16, 1887) he wrote to me as to an intended speech at Newcastle :—'You will, I have no doubt, press even more earnestly than before on the Irish people the duty and policy of maintaining order, and in these instances I shall be very glad if you will associate me with yourself.'

'The plan of campaign,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'was one of those devices that cannot be reconciled with the principles of law and order in a civilised country. Yet we all know that such devices are the certain result of misgovernment. With respect to this particular instance, if the plan be blameable (I cannot deny that I feel it difficult to acquit any such plan) I feel its authors are not one-tenth part so blameable as the government whose contemptuous refusal of what they have now granted, was the parent and source of the mischief.'[2] This is worth looking at.

The Cowper Commission, in February 1887, reported that refusal by some landlords explained much that had occurred in the way of combination, and that the growth of these combinations had been facilitated by the fall in prices, restriction of credit by the banks, and other circumstances making the payment of rent impossible.[3] Remarkable evidence was given by Sir Redvers Buller. He thought there should be some means of modifying and redressing the grievance of rents being still higher than the people can pay. 'You have got a very ignorant poor people, and the law should look after them, instead of which it has only looked after the rich.[4] This was exactly what Mr. Parnell had said. In the House the government did not believe him ; in Ireland they admitted his case to be true. In one instance General Buller wrote to the agents of

1 Lord Randolph had encouraged a plan of campaign in Ulster against home rule.
2 Speech at the Memorial Hall, July 29, 1887.
3 Report, p. 8, sect. 15.
4 *Freeman*, Jan. 1887.

the estate that he believed it was impossible for the tenants to pay the rent that was demanded; there might be five or six rogues among them, but in his opinion the greater number of them were nearer famine than paying rent.[1] In this very case ruthless evictions followed. The same scenes were enacted elsewhere. The landlords were within their rights, the courts were bound by the law, the police had no choice but to back the courts. The legal case was complete. The moral case remained, and it was through these barbarous scenes that in a rough and non-logical way the realities of the Irish land system for the first time gained access to the minds of the electors of Great Britain. Such devices as the plan of campaign came to be regarded in England and Scotland as what they were, incidents in a great social struggle. In a vast majority of cases the mutineers succeeded in extorting a reduction of rent, not any more immoderate than the reduction voluntarily made by good landlords, or decreed in the land-courts. No agrarian movement in Ireland was ever so unstained by crime.

Some who took part in these affairs made no secret of political motives. Unlike Mr. Parnell, they deliberately desired to make government difficult. Others feared that complete inaction would give an opening to the Fenian extremists. This section had already shown some signs both of their temper and their influence in certain proceedings of the Gaelic association at Thurles. But the mainspring was undoubtedly agrarian, and the force of the spring came from mischiefs that ministers had refused to face in time. 'What they call a conspiracy now,' said one of the insurgent leaders, 'they will call an Act of parliament next year.' So it turned out.

The Commission felt themselves 'constrained to recommend an earlier revision of judicial rents, on account of the straitened circumstances of Irish farmers.' What the commissioners thus told ministers in the spring was exactly what the Irish leader had told them in the previous autumn. They found that there were 'real grounds' for some legislation of the kind that the chief secretary, unconscious of what his cabinet was so rapidly to come to, had stigmatized as the policy of blackmail.

On the last day of March 1887, the government felt the necessity of introducing a measure based on facts that they had disputed, and on principles that they had repudiated. Leaseholders were admitted, some hundred thousand of them. That is, the more solemn of the forms of agrarian contract were set aside. Other provisions we may pass over. But this was not the bill to which the report of the Commission pointed. The pith of that report was the revision and abatement of judicial rents, and from the new bill this vital point was omitted. It could hardly have been otherwise after a curt declaration made by the prime minister in the previous August.

[1] Questions 16, 473-5.

'We do not contemplate any revision of judicial rents,' he said —immediately, by the way, after appointing a commission to find out what it was that they ought to contemplate. 'We do not think it would be honest in the first place, and we think it would be exceedingly inexpedient.'[1] He now repeated that to interfere with judicial rents because prices had fallen, would be to 'lay your axe to the root of the fabric of civilised society.'[2] Before the bill was introduced, Mr. Balfour, who had gone to the Irish office on the retirement of Sir M. H. Beach in the month of March, proclaimed in language even more fervid, that it would be folly and madness to break these solemn contracts.[3]

For that matter, the bill even as it first stood was in direct contravention to all such high doctrine as this, inasmuch as it clothed a court with power to vary solemn contracts by fixing a composition for outstanding debt, and spreading the payment of it over such a time as the judge might think fit. That, however, was the least part of what finally overtook the haughty language of the month of April. In May the government accepted a proposal that the court should not only settle the sum due by an applicant for relief for outstanding debt, but should fix a reasonable rent for the rest of the term. This was the very power of variation that ministers had, as it were only the day before, so roundly denounced. But then the tenants in Ulster were beginning to growl. In June ministers withdrew the power of variation, for now it was the landlords who were growling. Then at last in July the prime minister called his party together, and told them that if the bill were not altered, Ulster would be lost to the unionist cause, and that after all he must put into the bill a general revision of judicial rents for three years. So finally, as it was put by a speaker of that time, you have the prime minister rejecting in April the policy which in May he accepts; rejecting in June the policy which he had accepted in May; and then in July accepting the policy which he had rejected in June, and which had been within a few weeks declared by himself and his colleagues to be inexpedient and dishonest, to be madness and folly, and to be a laying of the axe to the very root of the fabric of civilised society. The simplest recapitulation made the bitterest satire.

The law that finally emerged from these singular operations dealt, it will be observed in passing, with nothing less than the chief object of Irish industry and the chief form of Irish property. No wonder that the landlords lifted up angry voices. True, the minister the year before had laid it down that if rectification of rents should be proved necessary, the landlords ought to be compensated by the state. Of this consolatory balm it is needless to say no more was ever heard; it was only

[1] *Hansard*, August 19, 1886. [2] *Ibid.* 313, March 22, 1887.
[3] *Ibid.* 312, April 22, 1887.

a graceful sentence in a speech, and proved to have little relation to purpose or intention. At the Kildare Street club in Dublin members moodily asked one another whether they might not just as well have had the policy of Mr. Parnell's bill adopted on College Green, as adopted at Westminster.

III

The moment had by this time once more come for testing the proposition from which Mr. Gladstone's policy had first started. The tory government had been turned out at the beginning of 1886 upon coercion, and Mr. Gladstone's government had in the summer of that year been beaten upon conciliation. 'I ventured to state in 1886,' said Mr. Gladstone a year later,[1] 'that we had arrived at the point where two roads met, or rather where two roads parted; one of them the road that marked the endeavour to govern Ireland according to its constitutionally expressed wishes; the other the road principally marked by ultra-constitutional measures, growing more and more pronounced in character.' Others, he said, with whom we had been in close alliance down to that date, considered that a third course was open, namely liberal concession, stopping short of autonomy, but upon a careful avoidance of coercion. Now it became visible that this was a mistake, and that in default of effective conciliation, coercion was the inevitable alternative. So it happened.

The government again unlocked the ancient armoury, and brought out the well-worn engines. The new Crimes bill in most particulars followed the old Act, but it contained one or two serious extensions, including a clause afterwards dropped, that gave to the crown a choice in cases of murder or certain other aggravated offences of carrying the prisoner out of his own country over to England and trying him before a Middlesex jury at the Old Bailey—a puny imitation of the heroic expedient suggested in 1769, of bringing American rebels over for trial in England under a slumbering statute of King Henry VIII. The most startling innovation of all was that the new Act was henceforth to be the permanent law of Ireland, and all its drastic provisions were to be brought into force whenever the executive government pleased.[2] This Act was not restricted as every former law of the kind had been in point of time, to meet an emergency; it was made a standing instrument of government. Criminal law and procedure is one of the most important of all the branches of civil rule, and certainly is one of the most important of all its elements. This was now in Ireland to shift up and down, to be one thing to-day and another thing to-morrow at executive discretion. Acts would

[1] Speech on Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) bill, March 29, 1887.

[2] This vital feature of the bill was discussed in the report stage, on a motion limiting the operation of the Act to three years. June 27, 1887, *Hansard*, 316, p. 1013. The clause was rejected by 180 to 119, or a majority of 61.

be innocent or would be crimes, just as it pleased the Irish minister. Parliament did not enact that given things were criminal, but only that they should be criminal when an Irish minister should choose to say so.[1] Persons charged with them would have the benefit of a jury or would be deprived of a jury, as the Irish minister might think proper.

Mr. Parnell was in bad health and took little part, but he made more than one pulverising attack in that measured and frigid style which, in a man who knows his case at first hand, may be so much more awkward for a minister than more florid onslaughts. He discouraged obstruction, and advised his followers to select vital points and to leave others alone. This is said to have been the first Coercion bill that a majority of Irish members voting opposed.

It was at this point that the government suddenly introduced their historic proposal for closure by guillotine. They carried (June 10) a resolution that at ten o'clock on that day week the committee stage should be brought compulsorily to an end, and that any clauses remaining undisposed of should be put forthwith without amendment or debate. The most remarkable innovation upon parliamentary rule and practice since Cromwell and Colonel Pride, was introduced by Mr. Smith in a characteristic speech, well larded with phrases about duty, right, responsibility, business of the country, and efficiency of the House. These 'solemnising complacencies' did not hide the mortifying fact that if it had really been one of the objects of Irish members for ten years past to work a revolution in the parliament where they were forced against their will to sit, they had at least, be such a revolution good or bad, succeeded in their design.

Perhaps looking forward with prophetic eye to a day that actually arrived six years later, Mr. Gladstone while objecting to the proposal as unjustified, threw the responsibility of it upon the government, and used none of the flaming colours of defiance. The bulk of the liberals abstained from the division. This practical accord between the two sets of leading men made the parliamentary revolution definite and finally clenched it. It was not without something of a funereal pang that members with a sense of the old traditions of the power, solemnity, and honour of the House of Commons came down on the evening of the seventeenth of June. Within a week they would be celebrating the fiftieth year of the reign of the Queen, and that night's business was the strange and unforeseen goal at which a journey of little more than the same period of time along the high democratic road had brought the commonalty of the realm since 1832. Among the provisions that went into the bill without any discussion in committee were those giving to the Irish

[1] See Palles, C. B., in Walsh's case. *Judgments of Superior Courts in cases under the Criminal Law and Procedure Amendment Act*, 1887, p. 110.

executive the power of stamping an association as unlawful; those dealing with special juries and change of the place of trial; those specifying the various important conditions attaching to proclamations, which lay at the foundation of the Act; those dealing with rules, procedure, and the limits of penalty. The report next fell under what Burke calls the accursed slider. That stage had taken three sittings, when the government moved (June 30) that it must close in four days. So much grace, however, was not needed; for after the motion had been carried the liberals withdrew from the House, and the Irishmen betook themselves to the galleries, whence they looked down upon the mechanical proceedings below.

IV

In Ireland the battle now began in earnest. The Irish minister went into it with intrepid logic. Though very different men in the deeper parts of character, Macaulay's account of Halifax would not be an ill-natured account of Mr. Balfour. 'His understanding was keen, sceptical, inexhaustibly fertile in distinctions and objections, his taste refined, his sense of the ludicrous exquisite; his temper placid and forgiving, but fastidious, and by no means prone either to malevolence or to enthusiastic admiration.' His business was to show disaffected Ireland that parliament was her master. Parliament had put the weapon into his hands, and it was for him to smite his antagonists to the ground. He made no experiments in judicious mixture, hard blows and soft speech, but held steadily to force and fear. His apologists argued that after all substantial justice was done even in what seemed hard cases, and even if the spirit of law were sometimes a trifle strained. Unluckily the peasant with the blunderbuss, as he waits behind the hedge for the tyrant or the traitor, says just the same. The forces of disorder were infinitely less formidable than they had been a hundred times before. The contest was child's play compared with the violence and confusion with which Mr. Forster or Lord Spencer had to deal. On the other hand the alliance between liberals and Irish gave to the struggle a parliamentary complexion, by which no coercion struggle had ever been marked hitherto. In the dialectic of senate and platform, Mr. Balfour displayed a strength of wrist, a rapidity, an instant readiness for combat, that took his foes by surprise, and roused in his friends a delight hardly surpassed in the politics of our day.

There was another important novelty this time. To England hitherto Irish coercion had been little more than a word of common form, used without any thought what the thing itself was like to the people coerced. Now it was different. Coercion had for once become a flaming party issue, and when that happens all the world awakes. Mr. Gladstone had proclaimed that the choice lay between conciliation and coercion. The

country would have liked conciliation, but did not trust his plan. When coercion came, the two British parties rushed to their swords, and the deciding body of neutrals looked on with anxiety and concern. There has never been a more strenuously sustained contest in the history of political campaigns. No effort was spared to bring the realities of repression vividly home to the judgment and feelings of men and women of our own island. English visitors trooped over to Ireland, and brought back stories of rapacious landlords, violent police, and famishing folk cast out homeless upon the wintry roadside. Irishmen became the most welcome speakers on British platforms, and for the first time in all our history they got a hearing for their lamentable tale. To English audiences it was as new and interesting as the narrative of an African explorer or a navigator in the Pacific. Our Irish instructors even came to the curious conclusion that ordinary international estimates must be revised, and that Englishmen are in truth far more emotional than Irishmen. Ministerial speakers, on the other hand, diligently exposed inaccuracy here or over-colouring there. They appealed to the English distaste for disorder, and to the English taste for mastery, and they did not overlook the slumbering jealousy of popery and priestcraft. But the course of affairs was too rapid for them, the strong harsh doses to the Irish patient were too incessant. "The Irish convictions in cases where the land was concerned rose to 2805, and of these rather over one-half were in cases where in England the rights of the prisoner would have been guarded by a jury. The tide of common popular feeling in this island about the right to combine, the right of public meeting, the frequent barbarities of eviction, the jarring indignities of prison treatment, flowed stronger and stronger. The general impression spread more and more widely that the Irish did not have fair play, that they were not being treated about speeches and combination and meetings as Englishmen or Scotchmen would be treated. Even in breasts that had been most incensed by the sudden reversal of policy in 1886, the feeling slowly grew that it was perhaps a pity after all that Mr. Gladstone had not been allowed to persevere on the fair-shining path of conciliation.

V

The proceedings under exceptional law would make an instructive chapter in the history of the union. Mr. Gladstone followed them vigilantly, once or twice without his usual exercise of critical faculty, but always bringing into effective light the contrast between this squalid policy and his anticipations of his own. Here we are only concerned with what affected British opinion on the new policy. One set of distressing incidents, not connected with the Crimes Act, created disgust and even horror in the country and set Mr. Gladstone

on fire. A meeting of some six thousand persons assembled in a large public square at Mitchelstown in the county of Cork.[1] It was a good illustration of Mr. Gladstone's habitual strategy in public movements, that he should have boldly and promptly seized on the doings at Mitchelstown as an incident well fitted to arrest the attention of the country. 'Remember Mitchelstown' became a watchword. The chairman, speaking from a carriage that did duty for a platform, opened the proceedings. Then a file of police endeavoured to force a way through the densest part of the crowd for a government note-taker. Why they did not choose an easier mode of approach from the rear, or by the side; why they had not got their reporter on to the platform before the business began; and why they had not beforehand asked for accommodation as was the practice, were three points never explained. The police unable to make a way through the crowd retired to the outskirt. The meeting went on. In a few minutes a larger body of police pressed up through the thick of the throng to the platform. A violent struggle began, the police fighting their way through the crowd with batons and clubbed rifles. The crowd flung stones and struck out with sticks, and after three or four minutes the police fled to their barracks—some two hundred and fifty yards away. So far there is no material discrepancy in the various versions of this dismal story. What followed is matter of conflicting testimony. One side alleged that a furious throng rushed after the police, attacked the barrack, and half murdered a constable outside, and that the constables inside in order to save their comrade and to beat off the assailing force, opened fire from an upper window. The other side declare that no crowd followed the retreating police at all, that the assault on the barrack was a myth, and that the police fired without orders from any responsible officer, in mere blind panic and confusion. One old man was shot dead, two others were mortally wounded and died within a week.

Three days later the affray was brought before the House of Commons. Any one could see from the various reports that the conduct of the police, the resistance of the crowd, and the guilt or justification of the bloodshed, were all matters in the utmost doubt and demanding rigorous inquiry. Mr. Balfour pronounced instant and peremptory judgment. The thing had happened on the previous Friday. The official report, however rapidly prepared, could not have reached him until the morning of Sunday. His officers at the Castle had had no opportunity of testing their official report by cross-examination of the constables concerned, nor by inspection of the barrack, the line of fire, and other material elements of the case. Yet on the strength of this hastily drawn and unsifted report received by him from Ireland on Sunday, and without even waiting for any informa-

[1] On September 9, 1887.

tion that eye-witnesses in the House might have to lay before him in the course of the discussion, the Irish minister actually told parliament once for all, on the afternoon of Monday, that he was of opinion, 'looking at the matter in the most impartial spirit, that the police were in no way to blame, and that no responsibility rested upon any one except upon those who convened the meeting under circumstances which they knew would lead to excitement and might lead to outrage.'[1] The country was astounded to see the most critical mind in all the House swallow an untested police report whole; to hear one of the best judges in all the country of the fallibility of human testimony, give offhand in what was really a charge of murder, a verdict of Not Guilty, after he had read the untested evidence on one side.

The rest was all of a piece. The coroner's inquest was held in due course. The proceedings were not more happily conducted than was to be expected where each side followed the counsels of ferocious exasperation. The jury after some seventeen days of it, returned a verdict of wilful murder against the chief police officer and five of his men. This inquisition was afterwards quashed (February 10, 1888) in the Queen's bench, on the ground that the coroner had perpetrated certain irregularities of form. Nobody has doubted that the Queen's bench was right; it seemed as if there had been a conspiracy of all the demons of human stupidity in this tragic bungle, from the first forcing of the reporter through the crowd, down to the inquest on the three slain men and onwards. The coroner's inquest having broken down, reasonable opinion demanded that some other public inquiry should be held. Even supporters of the government demanded it. If three men had been killed by the police in connection with a public meeting in England or Scotland, no home secretary would have dreamed for five minutes of resisting such a demand. Instead of a public inquiry, what the chief secretary did was to appoint a confidential departmental committee of policemen privately to examine, not whether the firing was justified by the circumstances, but how it came about that the police were so handled by their officers that a large force was put to flight by a disorderly mob. The three deaths were treated as mere accident and irrelevance. The committee was appointed to correct the discipline of the force, said the Irish minister, and in no sense to seek justification for actions which, in his opinion, required no justification.[2] Endless speeches were made in the House and out of it; members went over to Mitchelstown to measure distances, calculate angles, and fire imaginary rifles out of the barrack window; all sorts of theories of ricochet shots were invented, photographs and diagrams were taken. Some held the police

[1] Sept. 12, 1887. *Hansard*, 321, p. 327.
[2] Dec. 3, 1888. *Hansard*, 331, p. 916.

to be justified, others held them to be wholly unjustified. But without a judicial inquiry, such as had been set up in the case of Belfast in 1886, all these doings were futile. The government remained stubborn. The slaughter of the three men was finally left just as if it had been the slaughter of three dogs. No other incident of Irish administration stirred deeper feelings of disgust in Ireland, or of misgiving and indignation in England.

Here was, in a word, the key to the new policy. Every act of Irish officials was to be defended. No constable could be capable of excess. No magistrate could err. No prison rule was over harsh. Every severity technically in order must be politic.

VI

Among other remarkable incidents, the Pope came to the rescue, and sent an emissary to inquire into Irish affairs. The government had lively hopes of the emissary, and while they beat the Orange drum in Ulster with one hand, with the other they stealthily twitched the sleeve of Monsignor Persico. It came to little. The Congregation at Rome were directed by the Pope to examine whether it was lawful to resort to the plan of campaign. They answered that it was contrary both to natural justice and Christian charity. The papal rescript, embodying this conclusion, was received in Ireland with little docility. Unwisely the cardinals had given reasons, and the reasons, instead of springing in the mystic region of faith and morals, turned upon issues of fact as to fair rents. But then the Irish tenant thought himself a far better judge of a fair rent, than all the cardinals that ever wore red hats. If he had heard of such a thing as Jansenism, he would have known that he was in his own rude way taking up a position not unlike that of the famous teachers of Port Royal two hundred and thirty years before, that the authority of the Holy See is final as to doctrine, but may make a mistake as to fact.

Mr. Parnell spoke tranquilly of 'a document from a distant country,' and publicly left the matter to his catholic countrymen.[1] Forty catholic members of parliament met at the Mansion House in Dublin, and signed a document in which they flatly denied every one of the allegations and implications about fair rents, free contract, the land commission and all the rest, and roundly declared the Vatican circular to be an instrument of the unscrupulous foes both of the Holy See and of the people of Ireland. They told the Pope, that while recognising unreservedly as catholics the spiritual jurisdiction of the Holy See, they were bound solemnly to affirm that Irish catholics recognise no rights in Rome to interfere in their political affairs. A great meeting in the Phœnix Park ratified the same position by acclamation. At Cork, under the presidency of

[1] May 8, 1888.

the mayor, and jealously watched by forces of horse and foot, a great gathering in a scene of indiscribable excitement protested that they would never allow the rack-renters of Ireland to grind them down at the instigation of intriguers at Rome. Even in many cities in the United States the same voice was heard. The bishops knew well that the voice was strongly marked by the harsh accent of their Fenian adversaries. They issued a declaration of their own, protesting to their flocks that the rescript was confined within the spiritual sphere, and that his holiness was far from wishing to prejudice the nationalist movement. In the closing week of the year, the Pope himself judged that the time had come for him to make known that the action which had been 'so sadly misunderstood,' had been prompted by the desire to keep the cause in which Ireland was struggling from being weakened by the introduction of anything that could justly be brought in reproach against it.[1] The upshot of the intervention was that the action condemned by the rescript was not materially affected within the area already disturbed; but the rescript may have done something to prevent its extension elsewhere.

VII

Among the entries for 1887 there occur :—

Sandringham, Jan. 29.—A large party. We were received with the usual delicacy and kindness. Much conversation with the Prince of Wales. . . . Walk with ——, who charmed me much. *Jan.* 31.—Off by 11 A.M. to Cambridge. . . . Dined with the master of Trinity in hall. Went over the Newnham buildings: greatly pleased. Saw Mr. Sidgwick. Evening service at King's. . . . *Feb.* 2.—Hawarden at 5.30. Set to work on papers. Finished Greville's Journals. *Feb.* 3.—Wrote on Greville. *Feb.* 5.—Felled a chestnut. *Feb.* 27.—Read Lord Shaftesbury's *Memoirs*—an excellent discipline for me. *March* 5.—Dollis Hill [a house near Willesden often lent to him in these times by Lord and Lady Aberdeen] a refuge from my timidity, unwilling at 77 to begin a new London house. *March* 9.—Windsor [to dine and sleep]. The Queen courteous as always; somewhat embarrassed, as I thought. *March* 29.—Worked on Homer, Apollo, etc. Then turned to the Irish business and revolved much, with extreme difficulty in licking the question into shape. Went to the House and spoke 1½ hours as carefully and with as much measure as I could. Conclave on coming course of business. *April* 5.—Conversation with Mr. Chamberlain—ambiguous result, but some ground made. *April* 18.—H. of C. 4½-8¼ and 10-2. Spoke 1¼ h. My voice did its duty but with great effort. *April* 25.—Spoke for an hour upon the budget. R. Churchill excellent. Conclave on the forged letters. *May* 4.—Read earlier speeches of yesterday with care, and worked up the subject of Privilege. Spoke 1¼ h.

In June (1887) Mr. Gladstone started on a political campaign in South Wales, where his reception was one of the most triumphant in all his career. Ninety-nine hundredths of the

[1] *Tablet*, Jan. 5, 1889.

vast crowds who gave up wages for the sake of seeing him and doing him honour were strong protestants, yet he said to a correspondent, 'they made this demonstration in order to secure firstly and mainly justice to catholic Ireland. It is not after all a bad country in which such things take place.'

It was at Swansea that he said what he had to say about the Irish members. He had never at any time, from the hour when he formed his government, set up their exclusion as a necessary condition of home rule. All that he ever bargained for was that no proposal for inclusion should be made a ground for impairing real and effective self-government. Subject to this he was ready to adjourn the matter and to leave things as they were, until experience should show the extent of the difficulty and the best way of meeting it. Provisional exclusion had been suggested by a member of great weight in the party in 1886. The new formula was provisional inclusion. This announcement restored one very distinguished adherent to Mr. Gladstone, and it appeased the clamour of the busy knot who called themselves imperial federationists. Of course it opened just as many new difficulties as it closed old ones, but both old difficulties and new fell into the background before the struggle in Ireland.

June 2, 1887.—Off at 11.40. A tumultuous but interesting journey to Swansea and Singleton, where we were landed at 7.30. Half a dozen speeches on the way. A small party to dinner. 3.—A 'quiet day.' Wrote draft to the associations on the road, as model. Spent the forenoon in settling plans and discussing the lines of my meditated statement to-morrow with Sir Hussey Vivian, Lord Aberdare, and Mr. Stuart Rendel. In the afternoon we went to the cliffs and the Mumbles, and I gave some hours to writing preliminary notes on a business where all depends on the manner of handling. Small party to dinner. Read Cardiff and Swansea guides. 4.—More study and notes. 12-4½ the astonishing procession. Sixty thousand! Then spoke for near an hour. Dinner at 8, near an hundred, arrangements perfect. Spoke for nearly another hour; got through a most difficult business as well as I could expect. 5.—Church 11 A.M., notable sermon and H.C. (service long), again 6½ P.M., good sermon. Wrote to Sir W. Harcourt, Mr. Morley, etc. Walked in the garden. Considered the question of a non-political address 'in council'; we all decided against it. 6.—Surveys in the house, then 12-4 to Swansea for the freedom and opening the town library. I was rather jealous of a non-political affair at such a time, but could not do less than speak for thirty or thirty-five minutes for the two occasions. 4-8 to Park Farm, the beautiful vales, breezy common and the curious chambered cairn. Small dinner-party. 7.—Off at 8.15 and a hard day to London, the occasion of processions, hustles, and speeches; that at Newport in the worst atmosphere known since the Black Hole. Poor C. too was an invalid. Spoke near an hour to 3000 at Cardiff; about ¼ hour at Newport; more briefly at Gloucester and Swindon. Much enthusiasm even in the English part of the journey. Our party was reduced at Newport to the family, at Gloucester

to our two selves. C. H. Terrace at 6.20. Wrote to get off the House of Commons. It has really been a 'progress,' and an extraordinary one.

In December 1887, under the pressing advice of his physician, though 'with a great lazy reluctance,' Mr. Gladstone set his face with a family party towards Florence. He found the weather more northern than at Hawarden, but it was healthy. He was favourably impressed by all he saw of Italian society (English being cultivated to a degree that surprised him), but he did his best to observe Sir Andrew Clark's injunction that he should practise the Trappist discipline of silence, and the condition of his voice improved in consequence. He read Scartazzini's book on Dante, and found it fervid, generally judicial, and most unsparing in labour; and he was much interested in Beugnot's *Chute du Paganisme*. And as usual, he returned homeward as unwillingly as he had departed. During the session he fought his Irish battle with unsparing tenacity, and the most conspicuous piece of his activity out of parliament was a pilgrimage to Birmingham (November 1888). It was a great gathering of lieutenants and leading supporters from every part of the country. Here is a note of mine :—

On the day of the great meeting in Bingley Hall, somebody came to say that Mr. Gladstone wanted to know if I could supply him with a certain passage from a speech of Lord Hartington's. I found him in his dressing-gown, conning his notes and as lively as youth. He jumped up and pressed point after point on me, as if I had been a great public meeting. I offered to go down to the public library and hunt for the passage; he deprecated this, but off I went, and after some search unearthed the passage, and copied it out. In the evening I went to dine with him before the meeting. He had been out for a short walk to the Oratory in the afternoon to call on Cardinal Newman. He was not allowed, he told me, to see the cardinal, but he had had a long talk with Father Neville. He found that Newman was in the habit of reading with a reflector candle, but had not a good one. 'So I said I had a good one, and I sent it round to him.' He was entirely disengaged in mind during dinner, ate and drank his usual quantity, and talked at his best about all manner of things. At the last moment he was telling us of John Hunter's confirmation, from his own medical observation, of Homer's remark about Dolon; a bad fellow, whose badness Homer explains by the fact that he was a brother brought up among sisters only :—

αὐτὰρ ὁ μοῦνος ἔην μετὰ πέντε κασιγνήτῃσιν.[1]

Oliver Cromwell, by the way, was an only surviving boy among seven sisters, so we cannot take either poet or surgeon for gospel. Time was up, and bore us away from Homer and Hunter. He was perfectly silent in the carriage, as I remembered Bright had been when years before I drove with him to the same hall. The sight of the vast meeting was almost appalling, from fifteen to seventeen thousand people. He spoke with great vigour and freedom; the fine passages probably heard all over; many other passages certainly not heard, but his gesture so

[1] *Iliad*, x. 317. See *Homer and Homeric Age*, iii. 467 *n*.

strong and varied as to be almost as interesting as the words would have been. The speech lasted an hour and fifty minutes; and he was not at all exhausted when he sat down. The scene at the close was absolutely indescribable and incomparable, overwhelming like the sea.

He took part in parliamentary business at the beginning of December. On December 3rd he spoke on Ireland with immense fervour and passion. He was roused violently by the chairman's attempt to rule out strong language from debate, and made a vehement passage on that point. The substance of the speech was rather thin and not new, but the delivery magnificent. The Irish minister rose to reply at 7.50, and Mr. Gladstone reluctantly made up his mind to dine in the House. A friend by his side said, No, and at 8.40 hurried him down the back-stairs to a hospitable board in Carlton Gardens. He was nearly voiceless, until it was time for the rest of us to go back. A speedy meal revived him, and he was soon discoursing on O'Connell and many other persons and things, with boundless force and vivacity.

CHAPTER III

THE SPECIAL COMMISSION

(*1887–1890*)

My Lords, it appears to me that the measure is unfortunate in its origin, unfortunate in its scope and object, and unfortunate in the circumstances which accompanied its passage through the other House. It appears to me to establish a precedent most novel, and fraught with the utmost danger.—LORD HERSCHELL.[1]

MR. GLADSTONE'S ceaseless attention to the many phases of the struggle that was now the centre of his public life, was especially engaged on what remains the most amazing of them. I wish it were possible to pass it over, or throw it into a secondary place; but it is too closely connected with the progress of Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy in British opinion at a critical stage, and it is still the subject of too many perversions that affect his name. Transactions are to be found in our annals where wrong was done by government to individuals on a greater scale, where a powerful majority devised engines for the proscription of a weak minority with deadlier aim, and where the omnipotence of parliament was abused for the purpose of faction with more ruthless result. But whether we look at the squalid fraud in which the incident began, or at the tortuous parliamentary pretences by which it was worked out, or at the perversion of fundamental principles of legal administration involved in sending men to answer the gravest charges before a tribunal specially constituted at the absolute discretion of their bitterest political opponents—at the moment engaged in a fierce contest with them in another field—from whatever point of view we approach, the erection of the Special Commission of 1888 stands out as one of the ugliest things done in the name and under the forms of law in this island during the century.

In the spring of 1887 the conductors of *The Times*, intending to strengthen the hands of the government in their new and doubtful struggle, published a series of articles, in which old charges against the Irish leader and his men were served up

[1] House of Lords, August 10, 1888.

with fresh and fiery condiments. The allegations of crime were almost all indefinite; the method was by allusion, suggestion, innuendo, and the combination of ingeniously selected pieces, to form a crude and hideous mosaic. Partly from its extravagance, partly because it was in substance stale, the thing missed fire.

On the day on which the division was to be taken on the second reading of the Coercion bill, a more formidable bolt was shot. On that morning (April 18th, 1887), there appeared in the newspaper, with all the fascination of facsimile, a letter alleged to be written by Mr. Parnell. It was dated nine days after the murders in the Phœnix Park, and purported to be an apology, presumably to some violent confederate, for having as a matter of expediency openly condemned the murders, though in truth the writer thought that one of the murdered men deserved his fate.[1] Special point was given to the letter by a terrible charge, somewhat obliquely but still unmistakably made, in an article five or six weeks before, that Mr. Parnell closely consorted with the leading Invincibles when he was released on parole in April 1882; that he probably learned from them what they were about; and that he recognised the murders in the Phœnix Park as their handiwork.[2] The significance of the letter therefore was that, knowing the bloody deed to be theirs, he wrote for his own safety to qualify, recall, and make a humble apology for the condemnation which he had thought it politic publicly to pronounce. The town was thrown into a great ferment. At the political clubs and in the lobbies, all was complacent jubilation on the one side, and consternation on the other. Even people with whom politics were a minor interest were shocked by such an exposure of the grievous depravity of man.

Mr. Parnell did not speak until one o'clock in the morning, immediately before the division on the second reading of the bill. He began amid the deepest silence. His denial was scornful but explicit. The letter, he said, was an audacious fabrication. It is fair to admit that the ministerialists were not without some excuse of a sort for the incredulous laughter with which they received this repudiation. They put their trust in the most serious, the most powerful, the most responsible newspaper in the world; greatest in resources, in authority, in universal renown. Neglect of any possible precaution

[1] Here is the text of this once famous piece:—

'15/5/82.

'DEAR SIR,—I am not surprised at your friend's anger, but he and you should know that to denounce the murders was the only course open to us. To do that promptly was plainly our best policy. But you can tell him and all others concerned, that though I regret the accident of Lord F. Cavendish's death, I cannot refuse to admit that Burke got no more than his deserts. You are at liberty to show him this, and others whom you can trust also, but let not my address be known. He can write to the House of Commons.—Yours very truly, CHAS. S. PARNELL.'

[2] The three judges held this to be a correct interpretation of the language used in the article of March 10th, 1887. Report, pp. 57-8.

against fraud and forgery in a document to be used for the purpose of blasting a great political opponent would be culpable in no common degree. Of this neglect people can hardly be blamed for thinking that the men of business, men of the world, and men of honour who were masters of the *Times*, must be held absolutely incapable.

Those who took this view were encouraged in it by the prime minister. Within four-and-twenty hours he publicly took the truth of the story, with all its worst innuendoes, entirely for granted. He went with rapid stride from possibility to probability, and from probability to certainty. In a speech, of which precipitate credulity was not the only fault, Lord Salisbury let fall the sentence: 'When men who knew gentlemen who intimately knew Mr. Parnell murdered Mr. Burke.' He denounced Mr. Gladstone for making a trusted friend of such a man—one who had 'mixed on terms of intimacy with those whose advocacy of assassination was well known.' Then he went further. 'You may go back,' he said, 'to the beginning of British government, you may go back from decade to decade, and from leader to leader, but you will never find a man who has accepted a position, in reference to an ally tainted with the strong presumption of conniving at assassination, which has been accepted by Mr. Gladstone at the present time.'[1] Seldom has party spirit led eminent personages to greater lengths of dishonouring absurdity.

Now and afterwards people asked why Mr. Parnell did not promptly bring his libellers before a court of law. The answer was simple. The case would naturally have been tried in London. In other words, not only the plaintiff's own character, but the whole movement that he represented, would have been submitted to a Middlesex jury, with all the national and political prejudices inevitable in such a body, and with all the twelve chances of a disagreement, that would be almost as disastrous to Mr. Parnell as an actual verdict for his assailants. The issues were too great to be exposed to the hazards of a cast of the die. Then, why not lay the venue in Ireland? It was true that a favourable verdict might just as reasonably be expected from the prepossessions of Dublin, as an unfavourable one from the prepossessions of London. But the moral effect of an Irish verdict upon English opinion would be exactly as worthless, as the effect of an English verdict in a political or international case would be upon the judgment and feeling of Ireland. To procure a condemnation of the *Times* at the Four Courts, as a means of affecting English opinion, would not be worth a single guinea. Undoubtedly the subsequent course of this strange history fully justified the advice that Mr. Parnell received in this matter from the three persons in the House of Commons with whom on this point he took counsel.

[1] April 20, 1887.

II

The prudent decision against bringing a fierce political controversy before an English judge and jury was in a few months brought to nought, from motives that have remained obscure, and with results that nobody could foresee. The next act in the drama was the institution of proceedings for libel against the *Times* in November 1887, by an Irishman who had formerly sat in parliament as a political follower of Mr. Parnell. The newspaper met him by denying that the articles on *Parnellism and Crime* related to him. It went on to plead that the statements in the articles were true in substance and in fact. The action was tried before Lord Coleridge in July 1888, and the newspaper was represented by the advocate who happened to be the principal law officer of the crown. The plaintiff's counsel picked out certain passages, said that his client was one of the persons intended to be libelled, and claimed damages. He was held to have made an undoubted *prima facie* case on the two libels in which he had been specifically named. This gave the enemy his chance. The attorney general, speaking for three days, opened the whole case for the newspaper; repeated and enlarged upon the charges and allegations in its articles; stated the facts which he proposed to give in evidence; sought to establish that the fac-simile letter was really signed by Mr. Parnell; and finally put forward other letters now produced for the first time, which carried complicity and connivance to a further point. These charges he said that he should prove. On the third day he entirely changed his tack. Having launched this mass of criminating imputation, he then suddenly bethought him, so he said, of the hardships which his course would entail upon the Irishmen, and asked that in that action he should not be called upon to prove anything at all. The Irishmen and their leader remained under a load of odium that the law officer of the crown had cast upon them and declined to substantiate.

The production of this further batch of letters stirred Mr. Parnell from his usual impassiveness. His former determination to sit still was shaken. The day after the attorney general's speech, he came to the present writer to say that he thought of sending a paragraph to the newspapers that night, with an announcement of his intention to bring an action against the *Times*, narrowed to the issue of the letters. The old arguments against an action were again pressed upon him. He insisted, on the other side, that he was not afraid of cross-examination; that they might cross-examine as much as ever they pleased, either about the doings of the land league or the letters; that his hands would be found to be clean, and the letters to be gross forgeries. The question between us was adjourned; and meanwhile he fell in with my suggestion that

he should the next day make a personal statement to the House. The personal statement was made in his most frigid manner, and it was as frigidly received. He went through the whole of the letters, one by one; showed the palpable incredibility of some of them upon their very face, and in respect of those which purported to be written by himself, he declared, in words free from all trace of evasion, that he had never written them, never signed them, never directed nor authorised them to be written.

So the matter was left on the evening of Friday (July 6, 1888). On Monday Mr. Parnell came to the House with the intention to ask for a select committee. The feeling of the English friend to whom he announced his intention in the lobby, still was that the matter might much better be left where it stood. The new batch of letters had strengthened his position, for the Kilmainham letter was a fraud upon the face of it, and a story that he had given a hundred pounds to a fugitive from justice after the murders, had been demolished. The press throughout the country had treated the subject very coolly. The government would pretty certainly refuse a select committee, and what would be the advantage to him in the minds of persons inclined to think him guilty, of making a demand which he knew beforehand would be declined? Such was the view now pressed upon Mr. Parnell. This time he was not moved. He took his own course, as he had a paramount right to do. He went into the House and asked the ministers to grant a select committee to inquire into the authenticity of the letters read at the recent trial. Mr. Smith replied, as before, that the House was absolutely incompetent to deal with the charges. Mr. Parnell then gave notice that he would that night put on the paper the motion for a committee, and on Thursday demand a day for its discussion.

When Thursday arrived, either because the hot passion of the majority was irresistible, or from a cool calculation of policy, or simply because the situation was becoming intolerable, a new decision had been taken, itself far more intolerable than the scandal that it was to dissipate. The government met the Irish leader with a refusal and an offer. They would not give a committee, but they were willing to propose a commission to consist wholly or mainly of judges, with statutory power to inquire into 'the allegations and charges made against members of parliament by the defendants in the recent action.' If the gentlemen from Ireland were prepared to accept the offer, the government would at once put on the paper for the following Monday, notice of motion for leave to bring in a bill.[1]

When the words of the notice of motion appeared in print, it was found amid universal astonishment that the special commission was to inquire into the charges and allegations

[1] *Hansard*, July 12, 1888, p. 1102.

generally, not only against certain members of parliament, but also against 'other persons.' The enormity of this sudden extension of the operation was palpable. A certain member is charged with the authorship of incriminating letters. To clear his character as a member of parliament, he demands a select committee. We decline to give a committee, says the minister, but we offer you a commission of judges, and you may take our offer or refuse, as you please; only the judges must inquire not merely into your question of the letters, but into all the charges and allegations made against all of you, and not these only, but into the charges and allegations made against other people as well. This was extraordinary enough, but it was not all.

It is impossible to feel much surprise that Mr. Parnell was ready to assent to any course, however unconstitutional that course might be, if only it led to the exposure of an insufferable wrong. The credit of parliament and the sanctity of constitutional right were no supreme concern of his. He was burning to get at any expedient, committee or commission, which should enable him to unmask and smite his hidden foes. Much of his private language at this time was in some respects vague and ineffectual, but he was naturally averse to any course that might, in his own words, look like backing down. 'Of course,' he said, 'I am not sure that we shall come off with flying colours. But I think we shall. I am never sure of anything.' He was still confident that he had the clue.

On the second stage of the transaction, Mr. Smith, in answer to various questions in the early part of the sitting, made a singular declaration. The bill, he said, of which he had given notice, was a bill to be introduced in accordance with the offer already made. 'I do not desire to debate the proposal; and I have put it in this position on the Order Book, in order that it may be rejected or accepted by the honourable member in the form in which it stands.' Then in the next sentence, he said, 'If the motion is received and accepted by the House, the bill will be printed and circulated, and I will then name a day for the second reading. But I may say frankly that I do not anticipate being able to make provision for a debate on the second reading of a measure of this kind. It was an offer made by the government to the honourable gentleman and his friends, to be either accepted or rejected.'[1] The minister treated his bill as lightly as if it were some small proposal of ordinary form and of even less than ordinary importance. It is not inconceivable that there was design in this, for Mr. Smith concealed under a surface of plain and homely worth a very full share of parliamentary craft, and he knew well enough that the more extraordinary the measure, the more politic it always is to open with an air of humdrum.

The bill came on at midnight July 16, in a House stirred

[1] *Hansard*, July 16, p. 1410.

with intense excitement, closely suppressed. The leader of the House made the motion for leave to introduce the most curious innovation of the century, in a speech of half-a-minute. It might have been a formal bill for a provisional order, to be taken as of course. Mr. Parnell, his ordinary pallor made deeper by anger, and with unusual though very natural vehemence of demeanour, at once hit the absurdity of asking him whether he accepted or rejected the bill, not only before it was printed but without explanation of its contents. He then pressed in two or three weighty sentences the deeper absurdity of leaving him any option at all. The attorney general had said of the story of the facsimile letter, that if it was not genuine, it was the worst libel ever launched on a public man. If the first lord believed his attorney, said Mr. Parnell, instead of talking about making a bargain with me, he ought to have come down and said, 'The government are determined to have this investigation, whether the honourable member, this alleged criminal, likes it or not.'[1]

This was in fact precisely what the government had determined. The profession that the bill was a benevolent device for enabling the alleged criminals to extricate themselves was very soon dropped. The offer of a boon to be accepted or declined at discretion was transformed into a grand compulsory investigation into the connection of the national and land leagues with agrarian crime, and the members of parliament were virtually put into the dock along with all sorts of other persons who chanced to be members of those associations. The effect was certain. Any facts showing criminality in this or that member of the league would be taken to show criminality in the organization as a whole, and especially in the political leaders. And the proceeding could only be vindicated by the truly outrageous principle that where a counsel in a suit finds it his duty as advocate to make grave charges against members of parliament in court, then it becomes an obligation on the government to ask for an Act to appoint a judicial commission to examine those charges, if only they are grave enough.

The best chance of frustrating the device was lost when the bill was allowed to pass its first reading unopposed. Three of the leaders of the liberal opposition—two in the Commons, one in the Lords—were for making a bold stand against the bill from the first. Mr. Gladstone, on the contrary, with his lively instinct for popular feeling out of doors, disliked any action indicative of reluctance to face inquiry; and though holding a strong view that no case had been made out for putting aside the constitutional and convenient organ of a committee, yet he thought that an inquiry under thoroughly competent and impartial judges, after the right and true method of proceeding had been refused, was still better than no proceeding at

[1] *Hansard*, July 16, 1888, p. 1495.

all. This much of assent, however, was qualified. 'I think,' he said, 'that an inquiry under thoroughly competent and impartial judges is better than none. But that inquiry must, I think, be put into such a shape as shall correspond with the general law and principles of justice.' As he believed, the first and most indispensable conditions of an effective inquiry were wanting, and without them he 'certainly would have no responsibility whatever.'[1]

For the first few days politicians were much adrift. They had moments of compunction. Whether friends or foes of the Irish, they were perplexed by the curious double aspect of the measure. Mr. Parnell himself began to feel misgivings, as he came to realise the magnitude of the inquiry, its vast expense, its interminable length, its unfathomable uncertainties. On the day appointed for the second reading of the bill appointing the commission (July 23), some other subject kept the business back until seven o'clock. Towards six, Mr. Parnell who was to open the debate on his own side, came to an English friend, to ask whether there would be time for him to go away for an hour; he wished to examine some new furnace for assaying purposes, the existence of gold in Wicklow being one of his fixed ideas. So steady was the composure of this extraordinary man. The English friend grimly remarked to him that it would perhaps be rather safer not to lose sight of the furnace in which at any moment his own assaying might begin. His speech on this critical occasion was not one of his best Indifference to his audience often made him meagre, though he was scarcely ever other than clear, and in this debate there was only one effective point which it was necessary for him to press. The real issue was whether the reference to the judges should be limited or unlimited; should be a fishing inquiry at large into the history of an agrarian agitation ten years old, or an examination into definite and specified charges against named members of parliament. The minister, in moving the second reading, no longer left it to the Irish members to accept or reject; it now rested, he said, with the House to decide. It became evident that the acuter members of the majority, fully awakened to the opportunities for destroying the Irishmen which an unlimited inquisition might furnish, had made up their minds that no limit should be set to the scope of the inquisition. Boldly they tramped through a thick jungle of fallacy and inconsistency. They had never ceased to insist, and they insisted now, that Mr. Parnell ought to have gone into a court of law. Yet they fought as hard as they could against every proposal for making the procedure of the commission like the procedure of a law court. In a court there would have been a specific indictment. Here a specific indictment was what they most positively refused, and for it they

[1] *Hansard*, 329, July 23, 1888, p. 263.

substituted a roving inquiry, which is exactly what a court never undertakes. They first argued that nothing but a commission was available to test the charges against members of parliament. Then, when they had bethought themselves of further objects, they argued round that it was unheard of and inconceivable to institute a royal commission for members of parliament alone.

All arguments, however unanswerable, were at this stage idle, because Mr. Parnell had reverted to his original resolution to accept the bill, and at his request the radicals sitting below him abandoned their opposition. The bill passed the second reading without a division. This circumstance permitted the convenient assertion, made so freely afterwards, that the bill, irregular, unconstitutional, violent, as it might be, at any rate received the unanimous assent of the House of Commons.

Stormy scenes marked the progress of the bill through committee. Seeing the exasperation produced by their shifting of the ground, and the delay which it would naturally entail, ministers resolved on a bold step. It was now August. Government remembered the process by which they had carried the Coercion bill, and they improved upon it. After three days of committee, they moved that at one o'clock in the morning on the fourth sitting the chairman should break off discussion, put forthwith the question already proposed from the chair, then successively put forthwith all the remaining clauses, and so report the bill to the House. This process shut out all amendments not reached at the fatal hour, and is the most drastic and sweeping of all forms of closure. In the case of the Coercion bill, resort to the guillotine was declared to be warranted by the urgency of social order in Ireland. That plea was at least plausible. No such plea of urgency could be invoked for a measure, which only a few days before the government had considered to be of such secondary importance, that the simple rejection of it by Mr. Parnell was to be enough to induce them to withdraw it. The bill that had been proffered as a generous concession to Irish members, was now violently forced upon them without debate. Well might Mr. Gladstone speak of the most extraordinary series of proceedings that he had ever known.[1]

III

The three judges first met on September 17, 1888, to settle their procedure. They sat for one hundred and twenty-eight days, and rose for the last time on November 22, 1889. More than four hundred and fifty witnesses were examined. One counsel spoke for five days, another for seven, and a third for nearly twelve. The mammoth record of the proceedings fills eleven folio volumes, making between seven and eight thousand

[1] *Hansard*, Aug. 2, 1888, p. 1282.

pages. The questions put to witnesses numbered ninety-eight thousand.

It was a strange and fantastic scene. Three judges were trying a social and political revolution. The leading actors in it were virtually in the dock. The tribunal had been specially set up by their political opponents, without giving them any effective voice either in its composition or upon the character and scope of its powers. For the first time in England since the Great Rebellion, men were practically put upon their trial on a political charge, without giving them the protection of a jury. For the first time in that period judges were to find a verdict upon the facts of crime. The charge placed in the forefront was a charge of conspiracy. But to call a combination a conspiracy does not make it a conspiracy or a guilty combination, unless the verdict of a jury pronounces it to be one. A jury would have taken all the large attendant circumstances into account. The three judges felt themselves bound expressly to shut out those circumstances. In words of vital importance, they said, 'We must leave it for politicians to discuss, and for statesmen to determine, in what respects the present laws affecting land in Ireland are capable of improvement. *We have no commission to consider whether the conduct of which they are accused can be palliated by the circumstances of the time, or whether it should be condoned in consideration of benefits alleged to have resulted from their action.*'[1] When the proceedings were over, Lord Salisbury applauded the report as 'giving a very complete view of a very curious episode of our internal history.'[2] A very complete view of an agrarian rising—though it left out all palliating circumstances and the whole state of agrarian law!

Instead of opening with the letters, as the country expected, the accusers began by rearing a prodigious accumulation of material, first for the Irish or agrarian branch of their case, and then for the American branch. The government helped them to find their witnesses, and so varied a host was never seen in London before. There was the peasant from Kerry in his frieze swallow-tail and knee-breeches, and the woman in her scarlet petticoat who runs barefoot over the bog in Galway. The convicted member of a murder club was brought up in custody from Mountjoy prison or Maryborough. One of the most popular of the Irish representatives had been fetched from his dungeon, and was to be seen wandering through the lobbies in search of his warders. Men who had been shot by moonlighters limped into the box, and poor women in their blue-hooded cloaks told pitiful tales of midnight horror. The sharp spy was there, who disclosed sinister secrets from cities across the Atlantic, and the uncouth informer who betrayed or invented the history of rude and ferocious plots hatched at the country cross-roads, or over

[1] *Report*, p. 5. [2] *Hansard*, 342, p. 1357.

the peat-fire in desolate cabins in western Ireland. Divisional commissioners with their ledgers of agrarian offences, agents with bags full of figures and documents, landlords, priests, prelates, magistrates, detectives, smart members of that famous constabulary force which is the arm, eye, and ear of the Irish government—all the characters of the Irish melodrama were crowded into the corridors, and in their turn brought out upon the stage of this surprising theatre.

The proceedings speedily settled down into the most wearisome drone that was ever heard in a court of law. The object of the accusers was to show the complicity of the accused with crime by tracing crime to the league, and making every member of the league constructively liable for every act of which the league was constructively guilty. Witnesses were produced in a series that seemed interminable, to tell the story of five-and-twenty outrages in Mayo, of as many in Cork, of forty-two in Galway, of sixty-five in Kerry, one after another, and all with immeasurable detail. Some of the witnesses spoke no English, and the English of others was hardly more intelligible than Erse. Long extracts were read out from four hundred and forty speeches. The counsel on one side produced a passage that made against the speaker, and then the counsel on the other side found and read some qualifying passage that made as strongly for him. The three judges groaned. They had already, they said plaintively, ploughed through the speeches in the solitude of their own rooms. Could they not be taken as read? No, said the prosecuting counsel; we are building up an argument, and it cannot be built up in a silent manner. In truth it was designed for the public outside the court,[1] and not a touch could be spared that might deepen the odium. Week after week the ugly tale went on—a squalid ogre let loose among a population demoralised by ages of wicked neglect, misery, and oppression. One side strove to show that the ogre had been wantonly raised by the land league for political objects of their own; the other, that it was the progeny of distress and wrong, that the league had rather controlled than kindled its ferocity, and that crime and outrage were due to local animosities for which neither league nor parliamentary leaders were answerable.

On the forty-fourth day (February 5) came a lurid glimpse from across the Atlantic. The Irish emigration had carried with it to America the deadly passion for the secret society. A spy was produced, not an Irishman this time for a wonder, but an Englishman. He had been for eight-and-twenty years in the United States, and for more than twenty of them he had been in the pay of Scotland Yard, a military spy, as he put it, in the service of his country. There is no charge against him that he belonged to that foul species who provoke others to

[1] *Evidence*, iv. p. 219.

crime and then for a bribe betray them. He swore an oath of secrecy to his confederates in the camps of the Clan-na-Gael, and then he broke his oath by nearly every post that went from New York to London. It is not a nice trade, but then the dynamiter's is not a nice trade either.[1] The man had risen high in the secret brotherhood. Such an existence demanded nerves of steel; a moment of forgetfulness, an accident with a letter, the slip of a phrase in the two parts that he was playing, would have doomed him in the twinkling of an eye. He now stood a rigorous cross-examination like iron. There is no reason to think that he told lies. He was perhaps a good deal less trusted than he thought, for he does not appear on any occasion to have forewarned the police at home of any of the dynamite attempts that four or five years earlier had startled the English capital. The pith of his week's evidence was his account of an interview between himself and Mr. Parnell in the corridors of the House of Commons in April 1881. In this interview, Mr. Parnell, he said, expressed his desire to bring the Fenians in Ireland into line with his own constitutional movement, and to that end requested the spy to invite a notorious leader of the physical force party in America to come over to Ireland, to arrange a harmonious understanding. Mr. Parnell had no recollection of the interview, though he thought it very possible that an interview might have taken place. It was undoubtedly odd that the spy having once got his line over so big a fish, should never afterwards have made any attempt to draw him on. The judges, however, found upon a review of 'the probabilities of the case,' that the conversation in the corridor really took place, that the spy's account was correct, and that it was not impossible that in conversation with a supposed revolutionist, Mr. Parnell may have used such language as to leave the impression that he agreed with his interlocutor. Perhaps a more exact way of putting it would be that the spy talked the Fenian doctrine of physical force, and that Mr. Parnell listened.

IV.

At last, on the fiftieth day (February 14, 1889), and not before, the court reached the business that had led to its own creation. Three batches of letters had been produced by the newspaper. The manager of the newspaper told his story, and then the immediate purveyor of the letters told his. Marvellous stories they were.

The manager was convinced from the beginning, as he ingenuously said, quite independently of handwriting, that the letters were genuine. Why? he was asked. Because he felt they were the sort of letters that Mr. Parnell would be likely to write.

[1] The common-sense view of the employment of such a man seems to be set out in the speech of Sir Henry James (Cassell and Co.), pp. 149-51, and 494-5.

He counted, not wholly without some reason, on the public sharing this inspiration of his own indwelling light. The day was approaching for the division on the Coercion bill. Every journalist, said the manager, must choose his moment. He now thought the moment suitable for making the public acquainted with the character of the Irishmen. So, with no better evidence of authority than his firm faith that it was the sort of letter that Mr. Parnell would be likely to write, on the morning of the second reading of the Coercion bill, he launched the facsimile letter. In the early part of 1888 he received from the same hand a second batch of letters, and a third batch a few days later. His total payments amounted to over two thousand five hundred pounds. He still asked no questions as to the source of these expensive documents. On the contrary he particularly avoided the subject. So much for the cautious and experienced man of business.

The natural course would have been now to carry the inquiry on to the source of the letters. Instead of that, the prosecutors called an expert in handwriting. The court expostulated. Why should they not hear at once where the letters came from; and then it might be proper enough to hear what an expert had to say? After a final struggle the prolonged tactics of deferring the evil day, and prejudicing the case up to the eleventh hour, were at last put to shame. The second of the two marvellous stories was now to be told.

The personage who had handed the three packages of letters to the newspaper, told the Court how he had in 1885 compiled a pamphlet called *Parnellism Unmasked*, partly from materials communicated to him by a certain broken-down Irish journalist. To this unfortunate sinner, then in a state of penury little short of destitution, he betook himself one winter night in Dublin at the end of 1885. Long after, when the game was up and the whole sordid tragi-comedy laid bare, the poor wretch wrote: 'I have been in difficulties and great distress for want of money for the last twenty years, and in order to find means of support for myself and my large family, I have been guilty of many acts which must for ever disgrace me.'[1] He had now within reach a guinea a day, and much besides, if he would endeavour to find any documents that might be available to sustain the charges made in the pamphlet. After some hesitation the bargain was struck, a guinea a day, hotel and travelling expenses, and a round price for documents. Within a few months the needy man in clover pocketed many hundreds of pounds. Only the author of the history of *Jonathan Wild the Great* could do justice to such a story of the Vagabond in Luck—a jaunt to Lausanne, a trip across the Atlantic, incessant journeys backward and forward to Paris, the jingling of guineas, the rustle of hundred-pound notes, and now and then perhaps

1. Feb. 24, 1889. *Evidence*, vi. p. 20.

a humorous thought of simple and solemn people in newspaper offices in London, or a moment's meditation on that perplexing law of human affairs by which the weak things of the world are chosen to confound the things that are mighty.

The moment came for delivering the documents in Paris, and delivered they were with details more grotesque than anything since the foolish baronet in Scott's novel was taken by Dousterswivel to find the buried treasure in Saint Ruth's. From first to last not a test or check was applied by anybody to hinder the fabrication from running its course without a hitch or a crease. When men have the demon of a fixed idea in their cerebral convolutions, they easily fall victims to a devastating credulity, and the victims were now radiant as, with microscope and calligraphic expert by their side, they fondly gazed upon their prize. About the time when the judges were getting to work, clouds arose on this smiling horizon. It is good, says the old Greek, that men should carry a threatening shadow in their hearts even under the full sunshine. Before this, the manager learned for the first time, what was the source of the letters. The blessed doctrine of intrinsic certainty, however, which has before now done duty in far graver controversy, prevented him from inquiring as to the purity of the source.

The toils were rapidly enclosing both the impostor and the dupes. He was put into the box at last (Feb. 21). By the end of the second day, the torture had become more than he could endure. Some miscalled the scene dramatic. That is hardly the right name for the merciless hunt of an abject fellow-creature through the doublings and windings of a thousand lies. The breath of the hounds was on him, and he could bear the chase no longer. After proceedings not worth narrating, except that he made a confession and then committed his last perjury, he disappeared. The police traced him to Madrid. When they entered his room with their warrant (March 1), he shot himself dead. They found on his corpse the scapulary worn by devout catholics as a visible badge and token of allegiance to the heavenly powers. So in the ghastliest wreck of life, men still hope and seek for some mysterious cleansing of the soul that shall repair all.

This damning experience was a sharp mortification to the government, who had been throughout energetic confederates in the attack. Though it did not come at once formally into debate, it exhilarated the opposition, and Mr. Gladstone himself was in great spirits, mingled with intense indignation and genuine sympathy for Mr. Parnell as a man who had suffered an odious wrong.

V

The report of the commission was made to the crown on February 13, 1890. It reached the House of Commons about

ten o'clock the same evening. The scene was curious,—the various speakers droning away in a House otherwise profoundly silent, and every member on every bench, including high ministers of state, plunged deep and eager into the blue-book. The general impression was that the findings amounted to acquittal, and everybody went home in considerable excitement at this final explosion of the damaged blunderbuss. The next day Mr. Gladstone had a meeting with the lawyers in the case, and was keen for action in one form or another; but on the whole it was agreed that the government should be left to take the initiative.

The report was discussed in both Houses, and strong speeches were made on both sides. The government (Mar. 3) proposed a motion that the House adopted the report, thanked the judges for their just and impartial conduct, and ordered the report to be entered on the journals. Mr. Gladstone followed with an amendment, that the House deemed it to be a duty to record its reprobation of the false charges of the gravest and most odious description, based on calumny and on forgery, that had been brought against members of the House; and, while declaring its satisfaction at the exposure of these calumnies, the House expressed its regret at the wrong inflicted and the suffering and loss endured through a protracted period by reason of these acts of flagrant iniquity. After a handsome tribute to the honour and good faith of the judges, he took the point that some of the opinions in the report were in no sense and no degree judicial. How, for instance, could three judges, sitting ten years after the fact (1879-80) determine better than anybody else that distress and extravagant rents had nothing to do with crime? Why should the House of Commons declare its adoption of this finding without question or correction? Or of this, that the rejection of the Disturbance bill by the Lords in 1880 had nothing to do with the increase of crime? Mr. Forster had denounced the action of the Lords with indignation, and was not he, the responsible minister, a better witness than the three judges in no contact with contemporary fact? How were the judges authorised to affirm that the Land bill of 1881 had not been a great cause in mitigating the condition of Ireland? Another conclusive objection was that—on the declaration of the judges themselves, rightly made by them—what we know to be essential portions of the evidence were entirely excluded from their view.

He next turned to the findings, first of censure, then of acquittal. The findings of censure were in substance three. First, seven of the respondents had joined the league with a view of separating Ireland from England. The idea was dead, but Mr. Gladstone was compelled to say that in his opinion to deny the moral authority of the Act of Union was for an Irishman no moral offence whatever. Here the law-officer sitting

opposite to him busily took down a note. 'Yes, yes,' Mr. Gladstone exclaimed, 'you may take my words down. I heard you examine your witness from a pedestal, as you felt, of the greatest elevation, endeavouring to press home the monstrous guilt of an Irishman who did not allow moral authority to the Act of Union. In my opinion the Englishman has far more cause to blush for the means by which that Act was obtained.' As it happened, on the only occasion on which Mr. Gladstone paid the Commission a visit, he had found the attorney general cross-examining a leading Irish member, and this passage of arms on the Act of Union between counsel and witness then occurred.

The second finding of censure was that the Irish members incited to intimidation by speeches, knowing that intimidation led to crime. The third was that they never placed themselves on the side of law and order; they did not assist the administration, and did not denounce the party of physical force. As if this, said Mr. Gladstone, had not been the subject of incessant discussion and denunciation in parliament at the time ten years ago, and yet no vote of condemnation was passed upon the Irish members then. On the contrary, the tory party, knowing all these charges, associated with them for purposes of votes and divisions; climbed into office on Mr. Parnell's shoulders; and through the viceroy with the concurrence of the prime minister, took Mr. Parnell into counsel upon the devising of a plan for Irish government. Was parliament now to affirm and record a finding that it had scrupulously abstained from ever making its own, and without regard to the counter-allegation that more crime and worse crime was prevented by agitation? It was the duty of parliament to look at the whole of the facts of the great crisis of 1880-81—to the distress, to the rejection of the Compensation bill, to the growth of evictions, to the prevalence of excessive rents. The judges expressly shut out this comprehensive survey. But the House was not a body with a limited commission; it was a body of statesmen, legislators, politicians, bound to look at the whole range of circumstances, and guilty of misprision of justice if they failed so to do. 'Suppose I am told,' he said in notable and mournful words, 'that without the agitation Ireland would never have had the Land Act of 1881, are you prepared to deny that? I hear no challenges upon that statement, for I think it is generally and deeply felt that without the agitation the Land Act would not have been passed. As the man responsible more than any other for the Act of 1881—as the man whose duty it was to consider that question day and night during nearly the whole of that session—I must record my firm opinion that it would not have become the law of the land, if it had not been for the agitation with which Irish society was convulsed.'[1]

[1] See above, p. 222.

This bare table of his leading points does nothing to convey the impression made by an extraordinarily fine performance. When the speaker came to the findings of acquittal, to the dismissal of the infamous charges of the forged letters, of intimacy with the Invincibles, of being accessory to the assassinations in the Park, glowing passion in voice and gesture reached its most powerful pitch, and the moral appeal at its close was long remembered among the most searching words that he had ever spoken. It was not forensic argument, it was not literature; it had every note of true oratory—a fervid, direct and pressing call to his hearers as 'individuals, man by man, not with a responsibility diffused and severed until it became inoperative and worthless, to place himself in the position of the victim of this frightful outrage; to give such a judgment as would bear the scrutiny of the heart and of the conscience of every man when he betook himself to his chamber and was still.'

The awe that impressed the House from this exhortation to repair an enormous wrong soon passed away, and debate in both Houses went on the regular lines of party. Everything that was found not to be proved against the Irishmen, was assumed against them. Not proven was treated as only an evasive form of guilty. Though the three judges found that there was no evidence that the accused had done this thing or that, yet it was held legitimate to argue that evidence must exist—if only it could be found. The public were to nurse a sort of twilight conviction and keep their minds in a limbo of beliefs that were substantial and alive—only the light was bad.

In truth, the public did what the judges declined to do. They took circumstances into account. The general effect of this transaction was to promote the progress of the great unsettled controversy in Mr. Gladstone's sense. The abstract merits of home rule were no doubt untouched, but it made a difference to the concrete argument, whether the future leader of an Irish parliament was a proved accomplice of the Park murderers or not. It presented moreover the chameleon Irish case in a new and singular colour. A squalid insurrection awoke parliament to the mischiefs and wrongs of the Irish cultivators. Reluctantly it provided a remedy. Then in the fulness of time, ten years after, it dealt with the men who had roused it to its duty. And how? It brought them to trial before a special tribunal, invented for the purpose, and with no jury; it allowed them no voice in the constitution of the tribunal; it exposed them to long and harassing proceedings; and it thereby levied upon them a tremendous pecuniary fine. The report produced a strong recoil against the flagrant violence, passion, and calumny, that had given it birth; and it affected that margin of men, on the edge of either of the two great parties by whom electoral decisions are finally settled.

CHAPTER IV

AN INTERIM

(*1889–1891*)

The nobler a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath.—BACON.

AT the end of 1888 Mr. Gladstone with his wife and others of his house was carried off by Mr. Rendel's friendly care to Naples. Hereto, he told Lord Acton, 'we have been induced by three circumstances. First, a warm invitation from the Dufferins to Rome; as to which, however, there are *cons* as well as *pros*, for a man who like me is neither Italian nor Curial in the view of present policies. Secondly, our kind friend Mr. Stuart Rendel has actually offered to be our conductor thither and back, to perform for us the great service which you rendered us in the trip to Munich and Saint-Martin. Thirdly, I have the hope that the stimulating climate of Naples, together with an abstention from speech greater than any I have before enjoyed, might act upon my "vocal cord," and partially at least restore it.'

At Naples he was much concerned with Italian policy.

To Lord Granville.

Jan. 13, 1889.—My stay here where the people really seem to regard me as not a foreigner, has brought Italian affairs and policy very much home to me, and given additional force and vividness to the belief I have always had, that it was sadly impolitic for Italy to make enemies for herself beyond the Alps. Though I might try and keep back this sentiment in Rome, even my silence might betray it and I could not promise to keep silence altogether. I think the impolicy amounts almost to madness especially for a country which carries with her, nestling in her bosom, the 'standing menace' of the popedom. . . .

To J. Morley.

Jan. 10.—I hope you have had faith enough not to be troubled about my supposed utterances on the temporal power. . . . I will not trouble you with details, but you may rest assured I have never said the question of the temporal power was anything except an Italian question. I have a much greater anxiety than this about the Italian alliance with

Germany. It is in my opinion an awful error and constitutes the great danger of the country. It may be asked, 'What have you to do with it?' More than people might suppose. I find myself hardly regarded here as a foreigner. They look upon me as having had a real though insignificant part in the Liberation. It will hardly be possible for me to get through the affair of this visit without making my mind known. On this account mainly I am verging towards the conclusion that it will be best for me not to visit Rome, and my wife as it happens is not anxious to go there. If you happen to see Granville or Rosebery please let them know this.

We have had on the whole a good season here thus far. Many of the days delicious. We have been subjected here as well as in London to a course of social kindnesses as abundant as the waters which the visitor has to drink at a watering place, and so enervating from the abstraction of cares that I am continually thinking of the historical Capuan winter. I am in fact totally demoralised, and cannot wish not to continue so. Under the circumstances Fortune has administered a slight, a very slight physical correction. A land-slip, or rather a Tufo rock-slip of 50,000 tons, has come down and blocked the proper road between us and Naples.

To Lord Acton.

Jan. 23, 1889.—Rome is I think definitely given up. I shall be curious to know your reasons for approving this *gran rifiuto*. Meantime I will just glance at mine. I am not so much afraid of the Pope as of the Italian government and court. My sentiments are so very strong about the present foreign policy. The foreign policy of the government but not I fear of the government only. If I went to Rome, and saw the King and the minister, as I must, I should be treading upon eggs all the time with them. I could not speak out uninvited; and it is not satisfactory to be silent in the presence of those interested, when the feelings are very strong.

These feelings broke out in time in at least one anonymous article.[1] He told Lord Granville how anxious he was that no acknowledgment of authorship, direct or indirect, should come from any of his friends. 'Such an article of necessity lectures the European states. As one of a public of three hundred and more millions, I have a right to do this, but not in my own person.' This strange simplicity rather provoked his friends, for it ignored two things—first, the certainty that the secret of authorship would get out; second, if it did not get out, the certainty that the European states would pay no attention to such a lecture backed by no name of weight—perhaps even whether it were so backed or not. Faith in lectures, sermons, articles, even books, is one of the things most easily overdone.

Most of my reading, he went on to Acton, has been about the Jews and the Old Testament. I have not looked at the books you kindly sent me, except a little before leaving Hawarden; but I want to get a hold on the broader side of the Mosaic dispensation and the Jewish history. The great historic features seem to me in a large degree

1 'The Triple Alliance and Italy's Place in It.' By Outidanos. *Contemporary Review*, Oct. 1889. See Appendix.

independent of the critical questions which have been raised about the *redaction* of the Mosaic books. Setting aside Genesis, and the Exodus proper, it seems difficult to understand how either Moses or any one else could have advisedly published them in their present form; and most of all difficult to believe that men going to work deliberately after the captivity would not have managed a more orderly execution. My thoughts are always running back to the parallel question about Homer. In that case, those who hold that Peisistratos or some one of his date was the compiler, have at least this to say, that the poems in their present form are such as a compiler, having liberty of action, might have aimed at putting out from his workshop. Can that be said of the Mosaic books? Again are we not to believe in the second and third Temples as centres of worship because there was a temple at Leontopolis, as we are told? Out of the frying-pan into the fire.

When he left Amalfi (Feb. 14) for the north, he found himself, he says, in a public procession, with great crowds at the stations, including Crispi at Rome, who had once been his guest at Hawarden.

After his return home, he wrote again to Lord Acton:—

April 28, 1889.—I have long been wishing to write to you. But as a rule I never can write any letters that I wish to write. My volition of that kind is from day to day exhausted by the worrying demand of letters that I do not wish to write. Every year brings me, as I reckon, from three to five thousand new correspondents, of whom I could gladly dispense with 99 per cent. May you never be in a like plight.

Mary showed me a letter of recent date from you, which referred to the idea of my writing on the Old Testament. The matter stands thus: An appeal was made to me to write something on the general position and claims of the holy scriptures for the working men. I gave no pledge but read (what was for me) a good deal on the laws and history of the Jews with only two results: first, deepened impressions of the vast interest and importance attaching to them, and of their fitness to be made the subject of a telling popular account; secondly, a discovery of the necessity of reading much more. But I have never in this connection thought much about what is called the criticism of the Old Testament, only seeking to learn how far it impinged upon the matters that I really was thinking of. It seems to me that it does not impinge much. . . . It is the fact that among other things I wish to make some sort of record of my life. You say truly it has been very full. I add fearfully full. But it has been in a most remarkable degree the reverse of self-guided and self-suggested, with reference I mean to all its best known aims. Under this surface, and in its daily habit no doubt it has been selfish enough. Whether anything of this kind will ever come off is most doubtful. Until I am released from politics by the solution of the Irish problem, I cannot even survey the field.

I turn to the world of action. It has long been in my mind to found something of which a library would be the nucleus. I incline to begin with a temporary building here. Can you, who have built a library, give me any advice? On account of fire I have half a mind to corrugated iron, with felt sheets to regulate the temperature.

Have you read any of the works of Dr. Salmon? I have just finished his volume on Infallibility, which fills me with admiration of its easy

movement, command of knowledge, singular faculty of disentanglement, and great skill and point in argument; though he does not quite make one love him. He touches much ground trodden by Dr. Döllinger; almost invariably agreeing with him.

II

July 25, 1889, was the fiftieth anniversary of his marriage. The Prince and Princess of Wales sent him what he calls a beautiful and splendid gift. The humblest were as ready as the highest with their tributes, and comparative strangers as ready as the nearest. Among countless others who wrote was Bishop Lightfoot, great master of so much learning :—

I hope you will receive this tribute from one who regards your private friendship as one of the great privileges of his life.

And Döllinger :—

If I were fifteen years younger than I am, how happy I would be to come over to my beloved England once more, and see you surrounded by your sons and daughters, loved, admired, I would almost say worshipped, by a whole grateful nation.

On the other side, a clever lady having suggested to Browning that he should write an inscription for her to some gift for Mr. Gladstone, received an answer that has interest, both by the genius and fame of its writer, and as a sign of widespread feeling in certain circles in those days :—

Surely your kindness, even your sympathy, will be extended to me when I say, with sorrow indeed, that I am unable now conscientiously to do what, but a few years ago, I would have at least attempted with such pleasure and pride as might almost promise success. I have received much kindness from that extraordinary personage, and what my admiration for his transcendent abilities was and ever will be, there is no need to speak of. But I am forced to altogether deplore his present attitude with respect to the liberal party, of which I, the humblest unit, am still a member, and as such grieved to the heart by every fresh utterance of his which comes to my knowledge. Were I in a position to explain publicly how much the personal feeling is independent of the political aversion, all would be easy; but I am a mere man of letters, and by the simple inscription which would truly testify to what is enduring, unalterable in my esteem, I should lead people—as well those who know me as those who do not—to believe my approbation extended far beyond the bounds which unfortunately circumscribe it now. All this—even more—was on my mind as I sat, last evening, at the same table with the brilliantly-gifted man whom once—but that 'once' is too sad to remember.

At a gathering at Spencer House in the summer of 1888, when this year of felicitation opened, Lord Granville, on behalf of a number of subscribers, presented Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone with two portraits, and in his address spoke of the long span of years through which they had enjoyed 'the unclouded blessings of the home.' The expression was a just one. The extraordinary splendour and exalted joys of an outer life so

illustrious were matched in the inner circle of the hearth by a happy order, affectionate reciprocal attachments, a genial round of kindliness and duty, that from year to year went on untarnished, unstrained, unbroken. Visitors at Hawarden noticed that, though the two heads of the house were now old, the whole atmosphere seemed somehow to be alive with the freshness and vigour of youth; it was one of the youngest of households in its interests and activities. The constant tension of his mind never impaired his tenderness and wise solicitude for family and kinsfolk, and for all about him; and no man ever had such observance of decorum with such entire freedom from pharisaism.

Nor did the order and moral prosperity of his own home leave him complacently forgetful of fellow-creatures to whom life's cup had been dealt in another measure. On his first entry upon the field of responsible life, he had formed a serious and solemn engagement with a friend—I suppose it was Hope-Scott—that each would devote himself to active service in some branch of religious work.[1] He could not, without treason to his gifts, go forth like Selwyn or Patteson to Melanesia to convert the savages. He sought a missionary field at home, and he found it among the unfortunate ministers to 'the great sin of great cities.' In these humane efforts at reclamation he persevered all through his life, fearless of misconstruction, fearless of the levity or baseness of men's tongues, regardless almost of the possible mischiefs to the public policies that depended on him. Greville[2] tells the story how in 1853 a man made an attempt one night to extort money from Mr. Gladstone, then in office as chancellor of the exchequer, by threats of exposure; and how he instantly gave the offender into custody, and met the case at the police office. Greville could not complete the story. The man was committed for trial. Mr. Gladstone directed his solicitors to see that the accused was properly defended. He was convicted and sent to prison. By and by Mr. Gladstone inquired from the governor of the prison how the delinquent was conducting himself. The report being satisfactory, he next wrote to Lord Palmerston, then at the home office, asking that the prisoner should be let out. There was no worldly wisdom in it, we all know. But then what are people Christians for?

We have already seen[3] his admonition to a son, and how much importance he attaches to the dedication of a certain portion of our means to purposes of charity and religion. His example backed his precept. He kept detailed accounts under these heads from 1831 to 1897, and from these it appears that from 1831 to the end of 1890 he had devoted to objects of charity and religion upwards of seventy thousand pounds, and in the

[1] See above, vol. i. pp. 74, 423. [2] Third Part, vol. i. p. 62.
[3] Vol. i. p. 153.

remaining years of his life the figure in this account stands at thirteen thousand five hundred—this besides thirty thousand pounds for his cherished object of founding the hostel and library at Saint Deiniol's. His friend of early days, Henry Taylor, says in one of his notes on life that if you know how a man deals with money, how he gets it, spends it, keeps it, shares it, you know some of the most important things about him. His old chief at the colonial office in 1846 stands the test most nobly.

III

Near the end of 1889 among the visitors to Hawarden was Mr. Parnell. His air of good breeding and easy composure pleased everybody. Mr. Gladstone's own record is simple enough, and contains the substance of the affair as he told me of it later :—

Dec. 18, 1889.—Reviewed and threw into form all the points of possible amendment or change in the plan of Irish government, etc., for my meeting with Mr. Parnell. He arrived at 5.30, and we had two hours of satisfactory conversation ; but he put off the *gros* of it. 19.—Two hours more with Mr. P. on points in Irish government plans. He is certainly one of the very best people to deal with that I have ever known. Took him to the old castle. He seems to notice and appreciate everything.

Thinking of all that had gone before, and all that was so soon to come after, anybody with a turn for imaginary dialogue might easily upon this theme compose a striking piece.

In the spring of 1890 Mr. Gladstone spent a week at Oxford of which he spoke with immense enthusiasm. He was an honorary fellow of All Souls, and here he went into residence in his own right with all the zest of a virtuous freshman bent upon a first class. Though, I daresay, pretty nearly unanimous against his recent policies, they were all fascinated by his simplicity, his freedom from assumption or parade, his eagerness to know how leading branches of Oxford study fared, his naturalness and pleasant manners. He wrote to Mrs. Gladstone (Feb. 1) :—

Here I am safe and sound, and launched anew on my university career, all my days laid out and occupied until the morning of this day week, when I am to return to London. They press me to stay over the Sunday, but this cannot be thought of. I am received with infinite kindness, and the rooms they have given me are delightful. Weather dull, and light a medium between London and Hawarden. I have seen many already, including Liddon and Acland, who goes up to-morrow for a funeral early on Monday. Actually I have engaged to give a kind of Homeric lecture on Wednesday to the members of the union. The warden and his sisters are courteous and hospitable to the last degree. He is a unionist. The living here is very good, perhaps some put on for a guest, but I like the tone of the college ; the fellows are men of a high class, and their conversation is that of men with work to do. I had a most special purpose in

coming here which will be more than answered. It was to make myself safe so far as might be, in the articles[1] which eighteen months ago I undertook to write about the Old Testament. This, as you know perhaps, is now far more than the New the battle-ground of belief. There are here most able and instructed men, and I am already deriving great benefit.

Something that fell from him one morning at breakfast in the common room led in due time to the election of Lord Acton to be also an honorary member of this distinguished society. 'If my suggestion,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to one of the fellows, 'really contributed to this election, then I feel that in the dregs of my life I have at least rendered one service to the college. My ambition is to visit it and Oxford in company with him.'

IV

In 1890 both Newman and Döllinger died.

I have been asked from many quarters, Mr. Gladstone said to Acton, to write about the Cardinal. But I dare not. First, I do not know enough. Secondly, I should be puzzled to use the little knowledge that I have. I was not a friend of his, but only an acquaintance treated with extraordinary kindness whom it would ill become to note what he thinks defects, while the great powers and qualities have been and will be described far better by others. Ever since he published his University Sermons in 1843, I have thought him unsafe in philosophy, and no Butlerian though a warm admirer of Butler. No; it was before 1843, in 1841 when he published Tract XC. The *general* argument of that tract was unquestionable; but he put in sophistical matter without the smallest necessity. What I recollect is about General Councils: where in treating the declaration that they may err he virtually says, 'No doubt they may—unless the Holy Ghost prevents them.' But he was a wonderful man, a holy man, a very refined man, and (to me) a most kindly man.

Of Dr. Döllinger he contributed a charming account to a weekly print,[2] and to Acton he wrote:—

I have the fear that my Döllinger letters will disappoint you. When I was with him, he spoke to me with the utmost freedom; and so I think he wrote, but our correspondence was only occasional. I think nine-tenths of my intercourse with him was oral; with Cardinal Newman nothing like one-tenth. But with neither was the mere *corpus* of my intercourse great, though in D.'s case it was very precious, most of all the very first of it in 1845. . . . With my inferior faculty and means of observation, I have long adopted your main proposition. His attitude of mind was more historical than theological. When I first knew him in 1845, and he honoured me with very long and interesting conversations, they turned very much upon theology, and I derived from him what I thought very valuable and steadying knowledge. Again in 1874 during a long walk, when we spoke of the shocks and agitation of our time, he told me how the Vatican decrees had required him to reperuse and retry

[1] These articles appeared in *Good Words* (March-November 1890), and were subsequently published in volume form under the title of *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*.

[2] *Speaker*, Aug. 30, 1890.

the whole circle of his thought. He did not make known to me any general result; but he had by that time found himself wholly detached from the Council of Trent, which was indeed a logical necessity from his preceding action. The Bonn Conference appeared to show him nearly at the standing point of anglican theology. I thought him more liberal as a theologian than as a politician. On the point of church establishment he was as impenetrable as if he had been a Newdegate. He would not see that there were two sides to the question. I long earnestly to know what progress he had made at the last towards redeeming the pledge given in one of his letters to me, that the evening of his life was to be devoted to a great theological construction. . . . I should have called him an anti-Jesuit, but in *no* other sense, that is in no sense, a Jansenist. I never saw the least sign of leaning in that direction.

V

Here the reader may care to have a note or two of talk with him in these days :—

At Dollis Hill, Sunday, Feb. 22, 1891. . . . A few minutes after eight Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone came in from church, and we three sat down to dinner. A delightful talk, he was in full force, plenty of energy without vehemence. The range of topics was pretty wide, yet marvellous to say, we had not a single word about Ireland. Certainly no harm in that.

J. M.—A friend set me on a hunt this morning through Wordsworth for the words about France standing on the top of golden hours. I did not find them, but I came across a good line of Hartley Coleridge's about the Thames :—

'And the thronged river toiling to the main.'

Mr. G.—Yes, a good line. Toiling to the main recalls Dante :—

'Su la marina, dove 'l Po discende,
Per aver pace co' seguaci sui.'[1]

J. M.—Have you seen Symonds's re-issued volume on Dante? 'Tis very good. Shall I lend it you?

Mr. G.—Sure to be good, but not in the session. I never look at Dante unless I can have a great continuous draught of him. He's too big, he seizes and masters you.

J. M.—Oh, I like the picturesque bits, if it's only for half-an-hour before dinner; the bird looking out of its nest for the dawn, the afternoon bell, the trembling of the water in the morning light, and the rest that everybody knows.

Mr. G.—No, I cannot do it. By the way, ladies nowadays keep question books, and among other things ask their friends for the finest line in poetry. I think I'm divided between three, perhaps the most glorious is Milton's— [*Somehow this line slipped from memory, but the reader might possibly do worse than turn over Milton in search for his finest line.*] Or else Wordsworth's—'Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.' Yet what so splendid as Penelope's about not rejoicing the heart of anybody less than Odysseus?

μηδέ τι χείρονος ἀνδρὸς ἐϋφραίνοιμι νόημα.[2]

He talked a great deal to-night about Homer; very confident that he

[1] *Inf.* v. 98: 'Where Po descends for rest with his tributary streams.'
[2] *Od.* xx. 82.

had done something to drive away the idea that Homer was an Asiatic Greek. Then we turned to Scott, whom he held to be by far the greatest of his countrymen. I suggested John Knox. 'No, the line must be drawn firm between the writer and the man of action; no comparisons there.'

J. M.—Well, then, though I love Scott so much that if any man chooses to put him first, I won't put him second, yet is there not a vein of pure gold in Burns that gives you pause?

Mr. G.—Burns very fine and true, no doubt; but to imagine a whole group of characters, to marshal them, to set them to work, to sustain the action—I must count that the test of highest and most diversified quality.

We spoke of the new Shakespeare coming out. I said I had been taking the opportunity of reading vol. i., and should go over it all in successive volumes. *Mr. G.*—'Falstaff is wonderful—one of the most wonderful things in literature.'

Full of interest in *Hamlet*, and enthusiasm for it—comes closer than any other play to some of the strangest secrets of human nature—what *is* the key to the mysterious hold of this play on the world's mind? I produced my favourite position that *Measure for Measure* is one of the most modern of all the plays; the profound analysis of Angelo and his moral catastrophe, the strange figure of the duke, the deep irony of our modern time in it all. But I do not think he cared at all for this sort of criticism. He is too healthy, too objective, too simple, for all the complexities of modern morbid analysis.

Talked of historians; Lecky's two last volumes he had not yet read, but —— had told him that, save for one or two blots due to contemporary passion, they were perfectly honourable to Lecky in every way. Lecky, said Mr. G., 'has real insight into the motives of statesmen. Now Carlyle, so mighty as he is in flash and penetration, has no eye for motives. Macaulay, too, is so caught by a picture, by colour, by surface, that he is seldom to be counted on for just account of motive.'

He had been reading with immense interest and satisfaction Sainte-Beuve's *History of Port Royal*, which for that matter deserves all his praise and more, though different parts of it are written from antagonistic points of view. Vastly struck by Saint-Cyran. When did the notion of the spiritual director make its appearance in Europe? Had asked both Döllinger and Acton on this curious point. For his own part, he doubted whether the office existed before the Reformation.

J. M.—Whom do you reckon the greatest Pope?

Mr. G.—I think on the whole, Innocent III. But his greatness was not for good. What did he do? He imposed the dogma of transubstantiation; he is responsible for the Albigensian persecutions; he is responsible for the crusade which ended in the conquest of Byzantium. Have you ever realised what a deadly blow was the ruin of Byzantium by the Latins, how wonderful a fabric the Eastern Empire was?

J. M.—Oh, yes, I used to know my Finlay better than most books. Mill used to say a page of Finlay was worth a chapter of Gibbon: he explains how decline and fall came about.

Mr. G.—Of course. Finlay has it all.

He tried then to make out that the eastern empire was more wonderful than anything done by the Romans; it stood out for eleven centuries, while Rome fell in three. I pointed out to him that the whole solid framework of the eastern empire was after all built up by the Romans. But he is philhellene all through past and present.

CHAPTER V

BREACH WITH MR. PARNELL

(*1890–1891*)

Fortuna vitrea est,—tum quum splendet frangitur.—PUBLIL. SYRUS.
Brittle like glass is fortune,—bright as light, and then the crash.

IT would have been a miracle if the sight of all the methods of coercion, along with the ignominy of the forged letters, had not worked with strong effect upon the public mind. Distrust began to creep at a very rapid pace even into the ministerial ranks. The tory member for a large northern borough rose to resent 'the inexpedient treatment of the Irishmen from a party point of view,' to protest against the 'straining and stretching of the law' by the resident magistrates, to declare his opinion that these gentlemen were not qualified to exercise the jurisdiction entrusted to them, 'and to denounce the folly of making English law unpopular in Ireland, and provoking the leaders of the Irish people by illegal and unconstitutional acts.'[1] These sentiments were notoriously shared to the full by many who sat around him. Nobody in those days, discredited as he was with his party, had a keener scent for the drift of popular feeling than Lord Randolph Churchill, and he publicly proclaimed that this sending of Irish members of parliament to prison in such numbers was a feature which he did not like. Further, he said that the fact of the government not thinking it safe for public meetings of any sort to be held, excited painful feelings in English minds.[2] All this was after the system had been in operation for two years. Even strong unionist organs in the Irish press could not stand it.[3] They declared that if the Irish government wished to make the coercive system appear as odious as possible, they would act just as they were acting. They could only explain all these doings, not by 'wrong-headedness or imbecility,' but by a strange theory that there must be deliberate treachery among the government agents.

Before the end of the year 1889 the electoral signs were

[1] Mr. Hanbury, August 1, 1889. *Hansard*, 339, p. 98.
[2] At Birmingham, July 30, 1889. [3] *E.g. Northern Whig*, February 21, 1889.

unmistakable. Fifty-three bye-elections had been contested since the beginning of the parliament. The net result was the gain of one seat for ministers and of nine to the opposition. The Irish secretary with characteristic candour never denied the formidable extent of these victories, though he mourned over the evils that such temporary successes might entail, and was convinced that they would prove to be dearly bought.[1] A year later the tide still flowed on; the net gain of the opposition rose to eleven. In 1886 seventy-seven constituencies were represented by forty-seven unionists and thirty liberals. By the beginning of October in 1890 the unionist members in the same constituencies had sunk to thirty-six, and the liberals had risen to forty-one. Then came the most significant election of all.

There had been for some months a lull in Ireland. Government claimed the credit of it for coercion; their adversaries set it down partly to the operation of the Land Act, partly to the natural tendency in such agitations to fluctuate or to wear themselves out, and most of all to the strengthened reliance on the sincerity of the English liberals. Suddenly the country was amazed towards the middle of September by news that proceedings under the Coercion Act had been instituted against two nationalist leaders, and others. Even strong adherents of the government and their policy were deeply dismayed, when they saw that after three years of it, the dreary work was to begin over again. The proceedings seemed to be stamped in every aspect as impolitic. In a few days the two leaders would have been on their way to America, leaving a half-empty war chest behind them and the flame of agitation burning low. As the offences charged had been going on for six months, there was clearly no pressing emergency.

A critical bye-election was close at hand at the moment in the Eccles division of Lancashire. The polling took place four days after a vehement defence of his policy by Mr Balfour at Newcastle. The liberal candidate at Eccles expressly declared from his election address onwards, that the great issue on which he fought was the alternative between conciliation and coercion. Each candidate increased the party vote, the tory by rather more than one hundred, the liberal by nearly six hundred. For the first time the seat was wrested from the tories, and the liberal triumphed by a substantial majority.[2] This was the latest gauge of the failure of the Irish policy to conquer public approval, the last indication of the direction in which the currents of public opinion were steadily moving.[3] Then all at once a blinding sandstorm swept the ground.

[1] Mr. Balfour at Manchester. *Times*, October 21, 1889. [2] October 22, 1890.

[3] See Mr. Roby's speech at the Manchester Reform Club, Oct. 24, and articles in *Manchester Guardian*, Oct. 16 and 25, 1890. The *Times* (Oct. 23), while denying the inference that the Irish question was the question most prominent in the minds of large numbers of the electors, admitted that this was the vital question really before

II

One of those events now occurred that with their stern irony so mock the statesman's foresight, and shatter political designs in their most prosperous hour. As a mightier figure than Mr. Parnell remorsefully said on a grander stage, a hundred years before, cases sometimes befall in the history of nations where private fault is public disaster.

At the end of 1889, the Irish leader had been made a party in a suit for divorce. He betrayed no trace in his demeanour, either to his friends or to the House, of embarrassment at the position. His earliest appearance after the evil news, was in the debate on the first night of the session (February 11, '90), upon a motion about the publication of the forged letter. Some twenty of his followers being absent, he wished the discussion to be prolonged into another sitting. Closely as it might be supposed to concern him, he listened to none of the debate. He had a sincere contempt for speeches in themselves, and was wont to set down most of them to vanity. A message was sent that he should come upstairs and speak. After some indolent remonstrance, he came. His speech was admirable; firm without emphasis, penetrating, dignified, freezing, and unanswerable. Neither now nor on any later occasion save one did his composure in public or in private give way.

Mr. Gladstone was at Hawarden, wide awake to the possibility of peril. To Mr. Arnold Morley he wrote on November 4: —'I fear a thundercloud is about to burst over Parnell's head, and I suppose it will end the career of a man in many respects invaluable.' On the 13th he was told by the present writer that there were grounds for an impression that Mr. Parnell would emerge as triumphantly from the new charge, as he had emerged from the obloquy of the forged letters. The case was opened two days later, and enough came out upon the first day of the proceedings to point to an adverse result. A Sunday intervened, and Mr. Gladstone's self-command under storm-clouds may be seen in a letter written on that day to me:—

Nov. 16, 1890.—1. It is, after all, a thunderclap about Parnell. Will he ask for the Chiltern Hundreds? He cannot continue to lead? What could he mean by his language to you? The Pope has now clearly got a commandment under which to pull him up. It surely cannot have been always thus; for he represented his diocese in the church synod. 2. I thank you for your kind scruple, but in the country my Sundays are habitually and largely invaded. 3. Query, whether if a bye-seat were open and chanced to have a large Irish vote W—— might not be a good man there. 4. I do not think my Mem. is worth circulating but perhaps you would send it to Spencer. I sent a copy to Harcourt. 5. [A small parliamentary point, not related to the Parnell affair, nor otherwise

the constituency, and says generally, 'The election, like so many other bye-elections, has been decided by the return to their party allegiance of numbers of Gladstonians who in 1886 absented themselves from the polling booths.'

significant.] 6. Most warmly do I agree with you about the Scott *Journal*. How one loves him. 7. Some day I hope to inflict on you a talk about Homer and Homerology (as I call it).

The court pronounced a condemnatory decree on Monday, November 17th. Parliament was appointed to meet on Tuesday, the 25th. There was only a week for Irish and English to resolve what effect this condemnation should have upon Mr. Parnell's position as leader of one and ally of the other. Mr. Parnell wrote the ordinary letter to his parliamentary followers. The first impulses of Mr. Gladstone are indicated in a letter to me on the day after the decree :—

Nov. 18, 1890.—Many thanks for your letter. I had noticed the Parnell circular, not without misgiving. I read in the *P.M.G.* this morning a noteworthy article in the *Daily Telegraph*,[1] or rather from it, with which I very much agree. But I think it plain that we have nothing to say and nothing to do in the matter. The party is as distinct from us as that of Smith or Hartington. I own to some surprise at the apparent facility with which the R. C. bishops and clergy appear to take the continued leadership, but they may have tried the ground and found it would not *bear*. It is the Irish parliamentary party, and that alone to which we have to look. . . .

Such were Mr. Gladstone's thoughts when the stroke first fell.

III

In England and Scotland loud voices were speedily lifted up. Some treated the offence itself as an inexpiable disqualification. Others argued that, even if the offence could be passed over as lying outside of politics, it had been surrounded by incidents of squalor and deceit that betrayed a character in which no trust could ever be placed again. In some English quarters all this was expressed with a strident arrogance that set Irishmen on fire. It is ridiculous, if we remember what space Mr. Parnell filled in Irish imagination and feeling, how popular, how mysterious, how invincible he had been, to blame them because in the first moment of shock and bewilderment they did not instantly plant themselves in the judgment seat, always so easily ascended by Englishmen with little at stake. The politicians in Dublin did not hesitate. A great meeting was held at Leinster Hall in Dublin on the Thursday (November 20th). The result was easy to foresee. Not a

[1] 'That the effect of this trial will be to relegate Mr. Parnell for a time, at any rate, to private life, must we think be assumed. . . . Special exemptions from penalties which should apply to all public men alike cannot possibly be made in favour of exceptionally valuable politicians to suit the convenience of their parties. He must cease, for the present at any rate, to lead the nationalist party; and conscious as we are of the loss our opponents will sustain by his resignation, we trust that they will believe us when we say that we are in no mood to exult in it. . . . It is no satisfaction to us to feel that a political adversary whose abilities and prowess it was impossible not to respect, has been overthrown by irrelevant accident, wholly unconnected with the struggle in which we are engaged.'—*Daily Telegraph*, Nov. 17, 1890.

whisper of revolt was heard. The chief nationalist newspaper stood firm for Mr. Parnell's continuance. At least one ecclesiastic of commanding influence was supposed to be among the journal's most ardent prompters. It has since been stated that the bishops were in fact forging bolts of commination. No lurid premonitory fork or sheet flashed on the horizon, no rumble of the coming thunders reached the public ear.

Three days after the decree in the court, the great English liberal organization chanced to hold its annual meeting at Sheffield (November 20-21). In reply to a request of mine as to his views upon our position, Mr. Gladstone wrote to me as follows:—

Nov. 19, 1890.—Your appeal as to your meeting of to-morrow gives matter for thought. I feel (1) that the Irish have abstractedly a right to decide the question; (2) that on account of Parnell's enormous services—he has done for home rule something like what Cobden did for free trade, set the argument on its legs—they are in a position of immense difficulty; (3) that we, the liberal party as a whole, and especially we its leaders, have for the moment nothing to say to it, that we must be passive, must wait and watch. But I again and again say to myself, I say I mean in the interior and silent forum, 'It'll na dee.' I should not be surprised if there were to be rather painful manifestations in the House on Tuesday. It is yet to be seen what our Nonconformist friends, such a man as ——, for example, or such a man as —— will say. . . . If I recollect right, Southey's *Life of Nelson* was in my early days published and circulated by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. It would be curious to look back upon it and see how the biographer treats his narrative at the tender points. What I have said under figure 3 applies to me beyond all others, and notwithstanding my prognostications I shall maintain an extreme reserve in a position where I can do no good (in the present tense), and might by indiscretion do much harm. You will doubtless communicate with Harcourt and confidential friends only as to anything in this letter. The thing, one can see, is not a *res judicata*. It may ripen fast. Thus far, there is a total want of moral support from this side to the Irish judgment.

A fierce current was soon perceived to be running. All the elements so powerful for high enthusiasm, but hazardous where an occasion demands circumspection, were in full blast. The deep instinct for domestic order was awake. Many were even violently and irrationally impatient that Mr. Gladstone had not peremptorily renounced the alliance on the very morrow of the decree. As if, Mr. Gladstone himself used to say, it could be the duty of any party leader to take into his hands the intolerable burden of exercising the rigours of inquisition and private censorship over every man with whom what he judged the highest public expediency might draw him to co-operate. As if, moreover, it could be the duty of Mr. Gladstone to hurry headlong into action, without giving Mr. Parnell time or chance of taking such action of his own as might make intervention unnecessary. Why was it to be

assumed that Mr. Parnell would not recognise the facts of the situation? 'I determined,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'to watch the state of feeling in this country. I made no public declaration, but the country made up its mind. I was in some degree like the soothsayer Shakespeare introduces into one of his plays. He says, "I do not make the facts; I only foresee them." I did not foresee the facts even; they were present before me.'[1]

The facts were plain, and Mr. Gladstone was keenly alive to the full purport of every one of them. Men, in whose hearts religion and morals held the first place, were strongly joined by men accustomed to settle political action by political considerations. Platform-men united with pulpit-men in swelling the whirlwind. Electoral calculation and moral faithfulness were held for once to point the same way. The report from every quarter, every letter to a member from a constituent, all was in one sense. Some, as I have said, pressed the point that the misconduct itself made co-operation impossible; others urged the impossibility of relying upon political understandings with one to whom habitual duplicity was believed to have been brought home. We may set what value we choose upon such arguments. Undoubtedly they would have proscribed some of the most important and admired figures in the supreme doings of modern Europe. Undoubtedly some who have fallen into shift and deceit in this particular relation, have yet been true as steel in all else. For a man's character is a strangely fitted mosaic, and it is unsafe to assume that all his traits are of one piece, or inseparable in fact because they ought to be inseparable by logic. But people were in no humour for casuistry, and whether all this be sophistry or sense, the volume of hostile judgment and obstinate intention could neither be mistaken, nor be wisely breasted if home rule was to be saved in Great Britain.

Mr. Gladstone remained at Hawarden during the week. To Mr. Arnold Morley he wrote (Nov. 23):—'I have a bundle of letters every morning on the Parnell business, and the bundles increase. My own opinion has been the same from the first, and I conceive that the time for action has now come. All my correspondents are in unison.' Every post-bag was heavy with admonitions, of greater cogency than such epistles sometimes possess; and a voluminous bundle of letters still at Hawarden bears witness to the emotions of the time. Sir William Harcourt and I, who had taken part in the proceedings at Sheffield, made our reports. The acute manager of the liberal party came to announce that three of our candidates had bolted already, that more were sure to follow, and that this indispensable commodity in elections would become scarcer than ever. Of the general party opinion, there could be no shadow of doubt. It was no application of special rigour

[1] Speech at Retford, December 11, 1890. *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act I. Sc. 2.

because Mr. Parnell was an Irishman. Any English politician of his rank would have fared the same or worse, and retirement, temporary or for ever, would have been inevitable. Temporary withdrawal, said some; permanent withdrawal, said others; but for withdrawal of some sort, almost all were inexorable.

IV

Mr. Gladstone did not reach London until the afternoon of Monday, November 24. Parliament was to assemble on the next day. Three members of the cabinet of 1886, and the chief whip of the party,[1] met him in the library of Lord Rendel's house at Carlton Gardens. The issue before the liberal leaders was a plain one. It was no question of the right of the nationalists to choose their own chief. It was no question of inflicting political ostracism on a particular kind of moral delinquency. The question was whether the present continuance of the Irish leadership with the silent assent of the British leaders, did not involve decisive abstention at the polls on the day when Irish policy could once more be submitted to the electors of Great Britain? At the best the standing difficulties even to sanguine eyes, and under circumstances that had seemed so promising, were still formidable. What chance was there if this new burden were superadded? Only one conclusion was possible upon the state of facts, and even those among persons responsible for this decision who were most earnestly concerned in the success of the Irish policy, reviewing all the circumstances of the dilemma, deliberately hold to this day that though a catastrophe followed, a worse catastrophe was avoided. It is one of the commonest of all secrets of cheap misjudgment in human affairs, to start by assuming that there is always some good way out of a bad case. Alas for us all, this is not so. Situations arise alike for individuals, for parties, and for states, from which no good way out exists, but only choice between bad way and worse. Here was one of those situations. The mischiefs that followed the course actually taken, we see; then, as is the wont of human kind, we ignore the mischiefs that as surely awaited any other.

Mr. Gladstone always steadfastly resisted every call to express an opinion of his own that the delinquency itself had made Mr. Parnell unfit and impossible. It was vain to tell him that the party would expect such a declaration, or that his reputation required that he should found his action on moral censure all his own. 'What!' he cried, 'because a man is what is called leader of a party, does that constitute him a censor and a judge of faith and morals? I will not accept it. It would make life intolerable.' He adhered tenaciously to

[1] Lord Granville, Sir W. Harcourt, Mr. Arnold Morley, and myself.

political ground. 'I have been for four years,' Mr. Gladstone justly argued, 'endeavouring to persuade voters to support Irish autonomy. Now the voter says to me, "If a certain thing happens—namely, the retention of the Irish leadership in its present hands—I will not support Irish autonomy." How can I go on with the work? We laboriously rolled the great stone up to the top of the hill, and now it topples down to the bottom again, unless Mr. Parnell sees fit to go.' From the point of view of Irish policy this was absolutely unanswerable. It would have been just as unanswerable, even if all the dire confusion that afterwards came to pass had then been actually in sight. Its force was wholly independent, and necessarily so, of any intention that might be formed by Mr. Parnell.

As for that intention, let us turn to him for a moment. Who could dream that a man so resolute in facing facts as Mr. Parnell, would expect all to go on as before? Substantial people in Ireland who were preparing to come round to home rule at the prospect of a liberal victory in Great Britain, would assuredly be frightened back. Belfast would be more resolute than ever. A man might estimate as he pleased either the nonconformist conscience in England, or the catholic conscience in Ireland. But the most cynical of mere calculators,—and I should be slow to say that this was Mr. Parnell,—could not fall a prey to such a hallucination as to suppose that a scandal so frightfully public, so impossible for even the most mild-eyed charity to pretend not to see, and which political passion was so interested in keeping in full blaze, would instantly drop out of the mind of two of the most religious communities in the world; or that either of these communities could tolerate without effective protest so impenitent an affront as the unruffled continuity of the stained leadership. All this was independent of anything that Mr. Gladstone might do or might not do. The liberal leaders had a right to assume that the case must be as obvious to Mr. Parnell as it was to everybody else, and unless loyalty and good faith have no place in political alliances, they had a right to look for his spontaneous action. Was unlimited consideration due from them to him and none from him to them?

The result of the consultation was the decisive letter addressed to me by Mr. Gladstone, its purport to be by me communicated to Mr. Parnell. As any one may see, its language was courteous and considerate. Not an accent was left that could touch the pride of one who was known to be as proud a man as ever lived. It did no more than state an unquestionable fact, with an inevitable inference. It was not written in view of publication, for that it was hoped would be unnecessary. It was written with the expectation of finding the personage concerned in his usual rational frame of mind, and

with the intention of informing him of what it was right that he should know. The same evening Mr. McCarthy was placed in possession of Mr. Gladstone's views, to be laid before Mr. Parnell at the earliest moment.

1 *Carlton Gardens, Nov.* 24, 1890.—My dear Morley—Having arrived at a certain conclusion with regard to the continuance, at the present moment, of Mr. Parnell's leadership of the Irish party, I have seen Mr. McCarthy on my arrival in town, and have inquired from him whether I was likely to receive from Mr. Parnell himself any communication on the subject. Mr. McCarthy replied that he was unable to give me any information on the subject. I mentioned to him that in 1882, after the terrible murder in the Phœnix Park, Mr. Parnell, although totally removed from any idea of responsibility, had spontaneously written to me, and offered to take the Chiltern Hundreds, an offer much to his honour but one which I thought it my duty to decline.

While clinging to the hope of a communication from Mr. Parnell, to whomsoever addressed, I thought it necessary, viewing the arrangements for the commencement of the session to-morrow, to acquaint Mr. McCarthy with the conclusion at which, after using all the means of observation and reflection in my power, I had myself arrived. It was that notwithstanding the splendid services rendered by Mr. Parnell to his country, his continuance at the present moment in the leadership would be productive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland. I think I may be warranted in asking you so far to expand the conclusion I have given above, as to add that the continuance I speak of would not only place many hearty and effective friends of the Irish cause in a position of great embarrassment, but would render my retention of the leadership of the liberal party, based as it has been mainly upon the prosecution of the Irish cause, almost a nullity. This explanation of my views I begged Mr. McCarthy to regard as confidential, and not intended for his colleagues generally, if he found that Mr. Parnell contemplated spontaneous action; but I also begged that he would make known to the Irish party, at their meeting to-morrow afternoon, that such was my conclusion, if he should find that Mr. Parnell had not in contemplation any step of the nature indicated. I now write to you, in case Mr. McCarthy should be unable to communicate with Mr. Parnell, as I understand you may possibly have an opening to-morrow through another channel. Should you have such an opening, I beg you to make known to Mr. Parnell the conclusion itself, which I have stated in the earlier part of this letter. I have thought it best to put it in terms simple and direct, much as I should have desired had it lain within my power, to alleviate the painful nature of the situation. As respects the manner of conveying what my public duty has made it an obligation to say, I rely entirely on your good feeling, tact, and judgment.—Believe me sincerely yours,

W. E. Gladstone.

No direct communication had been possible, though every effort to open it was made. Indirect information had been received. Mr. Parnell's purpose was reported to have shifted during the week since the decree. On the Wednesday he had been at his stiffest, proudest, and coldest, bent on holding on at all cost. He thought he saw a way of getting something

done for Ireland; the Irish people had given him a commission; he should stand to it, so long as ever they asked him. On the Friday, however (Nov. 21), he appeared, so I had been told, to be shaken in his resolution. He had bethought him that the government might possibly seize the moment for a dissolution; that if there were an immediate election, the government would under the circumstances be not unlikely to win; if so, Mr. Gladstone might be thrown for four or five years into opposition; in other words, that powerful man's part in the great international transaction would be at an end. In this mood he declared himself alive to the peril and the grave responsibility of taking any course that could lead to consequences so formidable. That was the last authentic news that reached us. His Irish colleagues had no news at all. After this glimpse the curtain had fallen, and all oracles fell dumb.

If Mr. Gladstone's decision was to have the anticipated effect, Mr. Parnell must be made aware of it before the meeting of the Irish party (Nov. 25). This according to custom was to be held at two o'clock in the afternoon, to choose their chairman for the session. Before the choice was made, both the leader and his political friends should know the view and the purpose that prevailed in the camp of their allies. Mr. Parnell kept himself invisible and inaccessible alike to English and Irish friends until a few minutes before the meeting. The Irish member who had seen Mr. Gladstone the previous evening, at the last moment was able to deliver the message that had been confided to him. Mr. Parnell replied that he should stand to his guns. The other members of the Irish party came together, and, wholly ignorant of the attitude taken by Mr. Gladstone, promptly and with hardly a word of discussion re-elected their leader to his usual post. The gravity of the unfortunate error committed in the failure to communicate the private message to the whole of the nationalist members, with or without Mr. Parnell's leave, lay in the fact that it magnified and distorted Mr. Gladstone's later intervention into a humiliating public ultimatum. The following note, made at the time, describes the fortunes of Mr. Gladstone's letter:—

Nov. 25.—I had taken the usual means of sending a message to Mr. Parnell, to the effect that Mr. Gladstone was coming to town on the following day, and that I should almost certainly have a communication to make to Mr. Parnell on Tuesday morning. It was agreed at my interview with his emissary on Sunday night (November 23) that I should be informed by eleven on Tuesday forenoon where I should see him. I laid special stress on my seeing him before the party met. At half-past eleven, or a little later, on that day I received a telegram from the emissary that he could not reach his friend.[1] I had no difficulty in interpreting this. It meant that Mr. Parnell had made up his mind to fight it out,

[1] If anybody cares to follow all this up, he may read a speech of Mr. Parnell's at Kells, Aug. 16 1891, and a full reply of mine sent to the press, Aug. 17.

whatever line we might adopt; that he guessed that my wish to see him must from his point of view mean mischief; and that he would secure his re-election as chairman before the secret was out. Mr. McCarthy was at this hour also entirely in the dark, and so were all the other members of the Irish party supposed to be much in Mr. Parnell's confidence. When I reached the House a little after three, the lobby was alive with the bustle and animation usual at the opening of a session, and Mr. Parnell was in the thick of it, talking to a group of his friends. He came forward with much cordiality. 'I am very sorry,' he said, 'that I could not make an appointment, but the truth is I did not get your message until I came down to the House, and then it was too late.' I asked him to come round with me to Mr. Gladstone's room. As we went along the corridor he informed me in a casual way that the party had again elected him chairman. When we reached the sunless little room, I told him I was sorry to hear that the election was over, for I had a communication to make to him which might, as I hoped, still make a difference. I then read out to him Mr. Gladstone's letter. As he listened, I knew the look on his face quite well enough to see that he was obdurate. The conversation did not last long. He said the feeling against him was a storm in a teacup, and would soon pass. I replied that he might know Ireland, but he did not half know England; that it was much more than a storm in a teacup; that if he set British feeling at defiance and brazened it out, it would be ruin to home rule at the election; that if he did not withdraw for a time, the storm would not pass; that if he withdrew from the actual leadership now as a concession due to public feeling in this country, this need not prevent him from again taking the helm when new circumstances might demand his presence; that he could very well treat his re-election as a public vote of confidence by his party; that, having secured this, he would suffer no loss of dignity or authority by a longer or shorter period of retirement. I reminded him that for two years he had been practically absent from active leadership. He answered, in his slow dry way, that he must look to the future; that he had made up his mind to stick to the House of Commons and to his present position in his party, until he was convinced, and he would not soon be convinced, that it was impossible to obtain home rule from a British parliament; that if he gave up the leadership for a time, he should never return to it; that if he once let go, it was all over. There was the usual iteration on both sides in a conversation of the kind, but this is the substance of what passed. His manner throughout was perfectly cool and quiet, and his unresonant voice was unshaken. He was paler than usual, and now and then a wintry smile passed over his face. I saw that nothing would be gained by further parley, so I rose and he somewhat slowly did the same. 'Of course,' he said, as I held the door open for him to leave, 'Mr. Gladstone will have to attack me. I shall expect that. He will have a right to do that.' So we parted.

I waited for Mr. Gladstone, who arrived in a few minutes. It was now four o'clock. 'Well?' he asked eagerly the moment the door was closed, and without taking off cape or hat. 'Have you seen him?' 'He is obdurate,' said I. I told him shortly what had passed. He stood at the table, dumb for some instants, looking at me as if he could not believe what I had said. Then he burst out that we must at once publish his letter to me; at once, that very afternoon. I said, ''Tis too late now.' 'Oh, no,' said he, 'the *Pall Mall* will bring it out in a special edition.'

'Well, but,' I persisted, 'we ought really to consider it a little.' Reluctantly he yielded, and we went into the House. Harcourt presently joined us on the bench, and we told him the news. It was by and by decided that the letter should be immediately published. Mr. Gladstone thought that I should at once inform Mr. Parnell of this. There he was at that moment, pleasant and smiling, in his usual place on the Irish bench. I went into our lobby, and sent somebody to bring him out. Out he came, and we took three or four turns in the lobby. I told him that it was thought right, under the new circumstances, to send the letter to the press. 'Yes,' he said amicably, as if it were no particular concern of his, 'I think Mr. Gladstone will be quite right to do that; it will put him straight with his party.'

The debate on the address had meanwhile been running its course. Mr. Gladstone had made his speech. One of the newspapers afterwards described the liberals as wearing pre-occupied countenances. 'We were pre-occupied with a vengeance,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'and even while I was speaking I could not help thinking to myself, Here am I talking about Portugal and about Armenia, while every single creature in the House is absorbed in one thing only, and that is an uncommonly long distance from either Armenia or Portugal.' News of the letter, which had been sent to the reporters about eight o'clock, swiftly spread. Members hurried to ex-ministers in the dining-room to ask if the story of the letter was true. The lobbies were seized by one of those strange and violent fevers to which on such occasions the House of Commons is liable. Unlike the clamour of the Stock Exchange or a continental Chamber, there is little noise, but the perturbation is profound. Men pace the corridors in couples and trios, or flit from one knot to another, listening to an oracle of the moment modestly retailing a rumour false on the face of it, or evolving monstrous hypotheses to explain incredible occurrences. This, however, was no common crisis of lobby or gallery.

One party quickly felt that, for them at least, it was an affair of life or death. It was no wonder that the Irish members were stirred to the very depths. For five years they had worked on English platforms, made active friendships with English and Scottish liberals in parliament and out of it, been taught to expect from their aid and alliance that deliverance which without allies must remain out of reach and out of sight; above all, for nearly five years they had been taught to count on the puissant voice and strong right arm of the leader of all the forces of British liberalism. They suddenly learned that if they took a certain step in respect of the leadership of their own party, the alliance was broken off, the most powerful of Englishmen could help them no more, and that all the dreary and desperate marches since 1880 were to be faced once again in a blind and endless campaign, against the very party to whose friendship they had been taught to look for strength,

encouragement, and victory. Well might they recoil. More astounded still, they learned at the same time that they had already taken the momentous step in the dark, and that the knowledge of what they were doing, the pregnant meanings and the tremendous consequences of it, had been carefully concealed from them. Never were consternation, panic, distraction, and resentment better justified.

The Irishmen were anxious to meet at once. Their leader sat moodily in the smoking-room downstairs. His faculty of concentrated vision had by this time revealed to him the certainty of a struggle, and its intensity. He knew in minute detail every element of peril both at Westminster and in Ireland. A few days before, he mentioned to the present writer his suspicion of designs on foot in ecclesiastical quarters, though he declared that he had no fear of them. He may have surmised that the demonstration at the Leinster Hall was superficial and impulsive. On the other hand, his confidence in the foundations of his dictatorship was unshaken. This being so, if deliberate calculation were the universal mainspring of every statesman's action—as it assuredly is not nor can ever be—he would have spontaneously withdrawn for a season, in the assurance that if signs of disorganization were to appear among his followers, his prompt return from Elba would be instantly demanded in Ireland, whether or no it were acquiesced in by the leaders and main army of liberals in England. That would have been both politic and decent, even if we conceive his mind to have been working in another direction. He may, for instance, have believed that the scandal had destroyed the chances of a liberal victory at the election, whether he stayed or withdrew. Why should he surrender his position in Ireland and over contending factions in America, in reliance upon an English party to which, as he was well aware, he had just dealt a smashing blow? These speculations, however, upon the thoughts that may have been slowly moving through his mind, are hardly worth pursuing. Unluckily, the stubborn impulses of defiance that came naturally to his temperament were aroused to their most violent pitch and swept all calculations of policy aside. He now proceeded passionately to dash into the dust the whole fabric of policy which he had with such infinite sagacity, patience, skill, and energy, devised and reared.

Two short private memoranda from his own hand on this transaction, I find among Mr. Gladstone's papers. He read them to me at the time, and they illustrate his habitual practice of shaping and clearing his thought and recollection by committal to black and white :—

Nov. 26, 1890.—Since the month of December 1885 my whole political life has been governed by a supreme regard to the Irish question. For every day, I may say, of these five years, we have been engaged in laboriously rolling up hill the stone of Sisyphus. Mr. Parnell's decision

of yesterday means that the stone is to break away from us and roll down again to the bottom of the hill. I cannot recall the years which have elapsed. It was daring, perhaps, to begin, at the age I had then attained, a process which it was obvious must be a prolonged one.

Simply to recommence it now, when I am within a very few weeks of the age at which Lord Palmerston, the marvel of parliamentary longevity, succumbed, and to contemplate my accompanying the cause of home rule to its probable triumph a rather long course of years hence, would be more than daring; it would be presumptuous. My views must be guided by rational probabilities, and they exclude any such anticipation. My statement, therefore, that my leadership would, under the contemplated decision of Mr. Parnell, be almost a nullity, is a moderate statement of the case. I have been endeavouring during all these years to reason with the voters of the kingdom, and when the voter now tells me that he cannot give a vote for making the Mr. Parnell of to-day the ruler of Irish affairs under British sanction, I do not know how to answer him, and I have yet to ask myself formally the question what under those circumstances is to be done. I must claim entire and absolute liberty to answer that question as I may think right.

Nov. 28, 1890.—The few following words afford a key to my proceedings in the painful business of the Irish leadership.

It was at first my expectation, and afterwards my desire, that Mr. Parnell would retire by a perfectly spontaneous act. As the likelihood of such a course became less and less, while time ran on, and the evidences of coming disaster were accumulated, I thought it would be best that he should be impelled to withdraw, but by an influence conveyed to him, at least, from within the limits of his own party. I therefore begged Mr. Justin McCarthy to acquaint Mr. Parnell of what I thought as to the consequences of his continuance; I also gave explanations of my meaning, including a reference to myself; and I begged that my message to Mr. Parnell might be made known to the Irish party, in the absence of a spontaneous retirement.

This was on Monday afternoon. But there was no certainty either of finding Mr. Parnell, or of an impression on him through one of his own followers. I therefore wrote the letter to Mr. Morley, as a more delicate form of proceeding than a direct communication from myself, but also as a stronger measure than that taken through Mr. McCarthy, because it was more full, and because, as it was in writing, it admitted of the ulterior step of immediate publication. Mr. Morley could not find Mr. Parnell until after the first meeting of the Irish party on Monday. When we found that Mr. McCarthy's representation had had no effect, that the Irish party had not been informed, and that Mr. Morley's making known the material parts of my letter was likewise without result, it at once was decided to publish the letter; just too late for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, it was given for publication to the morning papers, and during the evening it became known in the lobbies of the House.

V

Mr. Parnell took up his new ground in a long manifesto to the Irish people (November 29). It was free of rhetoric and ornament, but the draught was skilfully brewed. He charged Mr. Gladstone with having revealed to him during his visit at

Hawarden in the previous December, that in a future scheme of home rule the Irish members would be cut down from 103 to 32, land was to be withdrawn from the competency of the Irish legislature, and the control of the constabulary would be reserved to the Imperial authority for an indefinite period, though Ireland would have to find the money all the time. This perfidious truncation of self-government by Mr. Gladstone was matched by an attempt on my part as his lieutenant only a few days before, to seduce the Irish party into accepting places in a liberal government, and this gross bribe of mine was accompanied by a despairing avowal that the hapless evicted tenants must be flung overboard. In other words, the English leaders intended to play Ireland false, and Mr. Parnell stood between his country and betrayal. Such a story was unluckily no new one in Irish history since the union. On that theme Mr. Parnell played many adroit variations during the eventful days that followed. Throw me to the English wolves if you like, he said, but at any rate make sure that real home rule and not its shadow is to be your price, and that they mean to pay it. This was to awaken the spectre of old suspicions, and to bring to life again those forces of violence and desperation which it had been the very crown of his policy to exorcise.

The reply on the Hawarden episode was prompt. Mr. Gladstone asserted that the whole discussion was one of those informal exchanges of view which go to all political action, and in which men feel the ground and discover the leanings of one another's minds. No single proposal was made, no proposition was mentioned to which a binding assent was sought. Points of possible improvement in the bill of 1886 were named as having arisen in Mr. Gladstone's mind, or been suggested by others, but no positive conclusions were asked for or were expected or were possible. Mr. Parnell quite agreed that the real difficulty lay in finding the best form in which Irish representation should be retained at Westminster, but both saw the wisdom and necessity of leaving deliberation free until the time should come for taking practical steps. He offered no serious objection on any point; much less did he say that they augured any disappointment of Irish aspirations. Apart from this denial, men asked themselves how it was that if Mr. Parnell knew that the cause was already betrayed, he yet for a year kept the black secret to himself, and blew Mr. Gladstone's praise with as loud a trumpet as before?[1] As for my own guilty attempt at corruption in proposing an absorption of the Irish party in English politics by means of office and emolument, I denied it with reasonable emphasis at the time, and it does not concern us here, nor in fact anywhere else.

[1] On the day after leaving Hawarden Mr. Parnell spoke at Liverpool, calling on Lancashire to rally to their 'grand old leader.' 'My countrymen rejoice,' he said, 'for we are on the safe path to our legitimate freedom and our future prosperity.' December 19, 1889.

VI

We now come to what was in its day the famous story of Committee Room Fifteen, so called from the chamber in which the next act of this dismal play went on.[1] The proceedings between the leader and his party were watched with an eagerness that has never been surpassed in this kingdom or in America. They were protracted, intense, dramatic, and the issue for a time hung in poignant doubt. The party interest of the scene was supreme, for if the Irishmen should rally to their chief, then the English alliance was at an end, Mr. Gladstone would virtually close his illustrious career, the rent in the liberal ranks might be repaired, and leading men and important sections would all group themselves afresh. 'Let us all keep quiet,' said one important unionist, 'we may now have to revise our positions.' Either way, the serpent of faction would raise its head in Ireland, and the strong life of organized and concentrated nationalism would perish in its coils. The personal interest was as vivid as the political,—the spectacle of a man of infinite boldness, determination, astuteness, and resource, with the will and pride of Lucifer, at bay with fortune and challenging a malignant star. Some talked of the famous Ninth Thermidor, when Robespierre fought inch by inch the fierce struggle that ended in his ruin. Others talked of the old mad discord of Zealot and Herodian in face of the Roman before the walls of Jerusalem. The great veteran of English politics looked on, wrathful and astounded at a preternatural perversity for which sixty years of public life could furnish him no parallel. The sage public looked on, some with the same interest that would in ancient days have made them relish a combat of gladiators; others with glee at the mortification of political opponents; others again with honest disgust at what threatened to be the ignoble rout of a beneficent policy.

It was the fashion for the moment in fastidious prejudiced quarters to speak of the actors in this ordeal as 'a hustling group of yelling rowdies.' Seldom have terms so censorious been more misplaced. All depends upon the point of view. Men on a raft in a boiling sea have something to think of besides deportment and the graces of serenity. As a matter of fact, even hostile judges then and since agreed that no case was ever better opened within the walls of Westminster than in the three speeches made on the first day by Mr. Sexton and Mr. Healy on the one side, and Mr. Redmond on the other. In gravity, dignity, acute perception, and that good faith which is the soul of real as distinct from spurious debate, the parliamentary critic recognises them as all of the first order. So for the most part things continued. It was not until a protracted

[1] See *The Parnell Split*, reprinted from the *Times* in 1891. Especially also *The Story of Room 15*, by Donal Sullivan, M.P., the accuracy of which seems not to have been challenged.

game had gone beyond limits of reason and patience, that words sometimes flamed high. Experience of national assemblies gives no reason to suppose that a body of French, German, Spanish, Italian, or even of English, Scotch, Welsh, or American politicians placed in circumstances of equal excitement arising from an incident in itself at once so squalid and so provocative, would have borne the strain with any more self-control.

Mr. Parnell presided, frigid, severe, and lofty, 'as if,' said one present, 'it were we who had gone astray, and he were sitting there to judge us.' Six members were absent in America, including Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien, two of the most important of all after Mr. Parnell himself. The attitude of this pair was felt to be a decisive element. At first, under the same impulse as moved the Leinster Hall meeting, they allowed their sense of past achievement to close their eyes; they took for granted the impossible, that religious Britain and religious Ireland would blot what had happened out of their thoughts; and so they stood for Mr. Parnell's leadership. The grim facts of the case were rapidly borne in upon them. The defiant manifesto convinced them that the leadership could not be continued. Travelling from Cincinnati to Chicago, they read it, made up their minds, and telegraphed to anxious colleagues in London. They spoke with warmth of Mr. Parnell's services, but protested against his unreasonable charges of servility to liberal wirepullers; they described the 'endeavours to fasten the responsibility for what had happened upon Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley' as reckless and unjust; and they foresaw in the position of isolation, discredit, and international ill-feeling which Mr. Parnell had now created, nothing but ruin for the cause. This deliverance from such a quarter (November 30) showed that either abdication or deposition was inevitable.

The day after Mr. Parnell's manifesto, the bishops came out of their shells. Cardinal Manning had more than once written most urgently to the Irish prelates the moment the decree was known, that Parnell could not be upheld in London, and that no political expediency could outweigh the moral sense. He knew well enough that the bishops in Ireland were in a very difficult strait, but insisted 'that plain and prompt speech was safest.' It was now a case, he said to Mr. Gladstone (November 29), of *res ad triarios*, and it was time for the Irish clergy to speak out from the housetops. He had also written to Rome. 'Did I not tell you,' said Mr. Gladstone when he gave me this letter to read, 'that the Pope would now have one of the ten commandments on his side?' 'We have been slow to act,' Dr. Walsh telegraphed to one of the Irish members (November 30), 'trusting that the party will act manfully. Our considerate silence and reserve are being dishonestly misinterpreted.' 'All sorry for Parnell,' telegraphed Dr. Croke, the Archbishop of Cashel—a manly and patriotic Irishman if ever one was—'but

still, in God's name, let him retire quietly and with good grace from the leadership. If he does so, the Irish party will be kept together, the honourable alliance with Gladstonian liberals maintained, success at general election secured, home rule certain. If he does not retire, alliance will be dissolved, election lost, Irish party seriously damaged if not wholly broken up, home rule indefinitely postponed, coercion perpetuated, evicted tenants hopelessly crushed, and the public conscience outraged. Manifesto flat and otherwise discreditable.' This was emphatic enough, but many of the flock had already committed themselves before the pastors spoke. To Dr. Croke, Mr. Gladstone wrote (Dec. 2):—'We in England seem to have done our part within our lines, and what remains is for Ireland itself. I am as unwilling as Mr. Parnell himself could be, to offer an interference from without, for no one stands more stoutly than I do for the independence of the Irish national party as well as for its unity.'

A couple of days later (Dec. 2) a division was taken in Room Fifteen upon a motion made in Mr. Parnell's interest, to postpone the discussion until they could ascertain the views of their constituents, and then meet in Dublin. It was past midnight. The large room, dimly lighted by a few lamps and candles placed upon the horse-shoe tables, was more than half in shadow. Mr. Parnell, his features barely discernible in the gloom, held a printed list of the party in his hand, and he put the question in cold, unmoved tones. The numbers were 29 for the motion—that is to say, for him, and 44 against him. Of the majority, many had been put on their trial with him in 1880; had passed months in prison with him under the first Coercion Act and suffered many imprisonments besides; they had faced storm, obloquy, and hatred with him in the House of Commons, a place where obloquy stings through tougher than Hibernian skins; they had undergone with him the long ordeal of the three judges; they had stood by his side with unswerving fidelity from the moment when his band was first founded for its mortal struggle down to to-day, when they saw the fruits of the struggle flung recklessly away, and the policy that had given to it all its reason and its only hope, wantonly brought to utter foolishness by a suicidal demonstration that no English party and no English leader could ever be trusted. If we think of even the least imaginative of them as haunted by such memories of the past, such distracting fears for the future, it was little wonder that when they saw Mr. Parnell slowly casting up the figures, and heard his voice through the sombre room announcing the ominous result, they all sat, both ayes and noes, in profound and painful stillness. Not a sound was heard, until the chairman rose and said without an accent of emotion that it would now be well for them to adjourn until the next day.

This was only the beginning. Though the ultimate decision of the party was quite certain, every device of strategy and tactics was meanwhile resolutely employed to avert it. His supple and trenchant blade was still in the hands of a consummate swordsman. It is not necessary to recapitulate all the moves in Mr. Parnell's grand manœuvre for turning the eyes of Ireland away from the question of leadership to the question of liberal good faith and the details of home rule. Mr. Gladstone finally announced that only after the question of leadership had been disposed of—one belonging entirely to the competence of the Irish party — could he renew former relations, and once more enter into confidential communications with any of them. There was only one guarantee, he said, that could be of any value to Ireland, namely the assured and unalterable fact that no English leader and no party could ever dream of either proposing or carrying any scheme of home rule which had not the full support of Irish representatives. This was obvious to all the world. Mr. Parnell knew it well enough, and the members knew it, but the members were bound to convince their countrymen that they had exhausted compliance with every hint from their falling leader, while Mr. Parnell's only object was to gain time, to confuse issues, and to carry the battle over from Westminster to the more buoyant and dangerously charged atmosphere of Ireland.

The majority resisted as long as they could the evidence that Mr. Parnell was audaciously trifling with them and openly abusing his position as chairman. On the evening of Friday (December 5) Mr. Sexton and Mr. Healy went to Mr. Parnell after the last communication from Mr. Gladstone. They urged him to bend to the plain necessities of the case. He replied that he would take the night to consider. The next morning (December 6) they returned to him. He informed them that his responsibility to Ireland would not allow him to retire. They warned him that the majority would not endure further obstruction beyond that day, and would withdraw. As they left, Mr. Parnell wished to shake hands, 'if it is to be the last time.' They all shook hands, and then went once more to the field of action.

It was not until after some twelve days of this excitement and stress that the scene approached such disorder as has often before and since been known in the House of Commons. The tension at last had begun to tell upon the impassive bronze of Mr. Parnell himself. He no longer made any pretence of the neutrality of the chair. He broke in upon one speaker more than forty times. In a flash of rage he snatched a paper from another speaker's hand. The hours wore away, confusion only became worse confounded, and the conclusion on both sides was foregone. Mr. McCarthy at last rose, and in a few moderate sentences expressed his opinion that there was no

use in continuing a discussion that must be barren of anything but reproach, bitterness, and indignity, and he would therefore suggest that those who were of the same mind should withdraw. Then he moved from the table, and his forty-four colleagues stood up and silently followed him out of the room. In silence they were watched by the minority who remained, in number twenty-six.[1]

VII

A vacancy at Bassetlaw gave Mr. Gladstone an opportunity of describing the grounds on which he had acted. His speech was measured and weighty, but the result showed the effect of the disaster. The tide, that a few weeks before had been running so steadily, now turned. The unionist vote remained almost the same as in 1885; the liberal vote showed a falling off of over 400 and the unionist majority was increased from 295 to 728.

About this time having to go to Ireland, on my way back I stopped at Hawarden, and the following note gives a glimpse of Mr. Gladstone at this evil moment (Dec. 17):—

I found him in his old corner in the 'temple of peace.' He was only half recovered from a bad cold, and looked in his worsted jacket, and dark tippet over his shoulders, and with his white, deep-furrowed face, like some strange Ancient of Days: so different from the man whom I had seen off at King's Cross less than a week before. He was cordial as always, but evidently in some perturbation. I sat down and told him what I had heard from different quarters about the approaching Kilkenny election. I mentioned X. as a Parnellite authority. 'What,' he flamed up with passionate vehemence, 'X. a Parnellite! Are they mad, then? Are they clean demented?' etc. etc.

I gave him my general impression as to the future. The bare idea that Parnell might find no inconsiderable following came upon him as if it had been a thunderclap. He listened, and catechised, and knit his brow.

Mr. G.—What do you think we should do in case (1) of a divided Ireland, (2) of a Parnellite Ireland?

J. M.—It is too soon to settle what to think. But, looking to Irish interests, I think a Parnellite Ireland infinitely better than a divided Ireland. Anything better than an Ireland divided, so far as she is concerned.

Mr. G.—Bassetlaw looks as if we were going back to 1886. For me that is notice to quit. Another five years' agitation at my age would be impossible—*ludicrous* (with much emphasis).

J. M.—I cannot profess to be surprised that in face of these precious dissensions men should have misgivings, or that even those who were with us, should now make up their minds to wait a little.

I said what there was to be said for Parnell's point of view; that, in

[1] The case for the change of mind which induced the majority who had elected Mr. Parnell to the chair less than a fortnight before, now to depose him, was clearly put by Mr. Sexton at a later date. To the considerations adduced by him nobody has ever made a serious political answer. The reader will find Mr. Sexton's argument in the reports of these proceedings already referred to.

his words to me of Nov. 25, he 'must look to the future'; that he was only five and forty; that he might well fear that factions would spring up in Ireland if he were to go; that he might have made up his mind, that whether he went or stayed, we should lose the general election when it came. The last notion seemed quite outrageous to Mr. G., and he could not suppose that it had ever entered Parnell's head.

Mr. G.—You have no regrets at the course we took?

J. M.—None—none. It was inevitable. I have never doubted. That does not prevent lamentation that it was inevitable. It is the old story. English interference is always at the root of mischief in Ireland. But how could we help what we did? We had a right to count on Parnell's sanity and his sincerity. . . .

Mr. G. then got up and fished out of a drawer the memorandum of his talk with Parnell at Hawarden on Dec. 18, 1889, and also a memorandum written for his own use on the general political position at the time of the divorce trial. The former contained not a word as to the constabulary, and in other matters only put a number of points, alternative courses, etc., without a single final or definite decision. While he was fishing in his drawer, he said, as if speaking to himself, 'It looks as if I should get my release even sooner than I had expected.'

'That,' I said, 'is a momentous matter which will need immense deliberation.' So it will, indeed.

Mr. G.—Do you recall anything in history like the present distracted scenes in Ireland?

J. M.—Florençe, Pisa, or some other Italian city, with the French or the Emperor at the gates?

Mr. G.—I'll tell you what is the only thing that I can think of as at all like it. Do you remember how it was at the siege of Jerusalem—the internecine fury of the Jewish factions, the Ζηλωταί, and the rest—while Titus and the legions were marching on the city!

We went in to luncheon. Something was said of our friend ——, and the new-found malady, Raynaud's disease.

J. M.—Joseph de Maistre says that in the innocent primitive ages men died of diseases without names.

Mr. G.—Homer never mentions diseases at all.

J. M.—Not many of them die a natural death in Homer.

Mr. G.—Do you not recollect where Odysseus meets his mother among the shades, and she says:—

> Οὔτε τις οὖν μοι νοῦσος ἐπήλυθεν . . .
> ἀλλά με σός τε πόθος σά τε μήδεα, φαίδιμ' Ὀδυσσεῦ,
> σή τ' ἀγανοφροσύνη μελιηδέα θυμὸν ἀπηύρα.[1]

J. M.—Beautiful lines. Πόθος such a tender word, and it is untranslatable.

Mr. G.—Oh, *desiderium*.

> 'Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus
> Tam cari capitis.'[2]

J. M.—The Scotch word '*wearying*' for somebody. And *Sehnsucht*.

Then Mr. G. went off to his library to hunt up the reference, and when

[1] *Od.* xi. 200. 'It was not sickness that came upon me; it was wearying for thee and thy lost counsels, glorious Odysseus, and for all thy gentle kindness, this it was that broke the heart within me.'

[2] Hor. *Carm.* i. 24.

I followed him, I found the worn old *Odyssey* open at the passage in the eleventh book. As he left the room, he looked at me and said, 'Ah, this is very different stuff for talking about, from all the wretched work we were speaking of just now. Homer's fellows would have cut a very different figure, and made short work in that committee room last week!' We had a few more words on politics. . . . So I bade him good-bye. . . .

In view of the horrors of dissension in Ireland, well-meaning attempts were made at the beginning of the year to bring about an understanding. The Irish members, returning from America where the schism at home had quenched all enthusiasm and killed their operations, made their way to Boulogne, for the two most important among them were liable to instant arrest if they were found in the United Kingdom. They thought that Mr. Parnell was really desirous to withdraw on such terms as would save his self-respect, and if he could plead hereafter that before giving way he had secured a genuine scheme of home rule. Some suspicion may well have arisen in their minds when a strange suggestion came from Mr. Parnell that the liberal leaders should enter into a secret engagement about constabulary and the other points. He had hardly given such happy evidence of his measure of the sanctity of political confidences, as to encourage further experiments. The proposal was absurd on the face of it. These suspicions soon became certainties, and the Boulogne negotiations came to an end. I should conjecture that those days made the severest ordeal through which Mr. Gladstone, with his extreme sensibility and his abhorrence of personal contention, ever passed. Yet his facility and versatility of mood was unimpaired, as a casual note or two of mine may show:—

. . . Mr. G.'s confabulation [with an Irish member] proved to have been sought for the purpose of warning him that Parnell was about to issue a manifesto in which he would make all manner of mischief. Mr. G. and I had a few moments in the room at the back of the chair; he seemed considerably perturbed, pale, and concentrated. We walked into the House together; he picked up the points of the matter in hand (a motion for appropriating all the time) and made one of the gayest, brightest, and most delightful speeches in the world—the whole House enjoying it consumedly. Who else could perform these magic transitions?

Mr. G. came into the House, looking rather anxious; gave us an account of his interview with the Irish deputation; and in the midst of it got up to say his few sentences of condolence with the Speaker on the death of Mrs. Peel—the closing phrases admirably chosen, and the tones of his voice grave, sincere, sonorous, and compassionate. When he sat down, he resumed his talk with H. and me. He was so touched, he said, by those 'poor wretches' on the deputation, that he would fain, if he could, make some announcement that would ease their unlucky position.

[A question of a letter in reply to some application prompted by Mr. Parnell. Mr. Gladstone asked two of us to try our hands at a draft.] At last we got it ready for him and presently we went to his room. It

was now six o'clock. Mr. G. read aloud in full deep voice the letter he had prepared on the base of our short draft. We suggested this and that, and generally argued about phrases for an hour, winding up with a terrific battle on two prodigious points: (1) whether he ought to say, 'after this statement of my views,' or 'I have now fully stated my views on the points you raise'; (2) 'You will *doubtless* concur,' or '*probably* concur.' Most characteristic, most amazing. It was past seven before the veteran would let go—and then I must say that he looked his full years. Think what his day had been, in mere intellectual strain, apart from what strains him far more than that—his strife with persons and his compassion for the unlucky Irishmen. I heard afterwards that when he got home, he was for once in his life done up, and on the following morning he lay in bed. All the same, in the evening he went to see *Antony and Cleopatra*, and he had a little ovation. As he drove away the crowd cheered him with cries of 'Bravo, don't you mind Parnell!' Plenty of race feeling left, in spite of union of hearts!

No leader ever set a finer example under reverse than did Mr. Gladstone during these tedious and desperate proceedings. He was steadfastly loyal, considerate, and sympathetic towards the Irishmen who had trusted him; his firm patience was not for a moment worn out; in vain a boisterous wave now and again beat upon him from one quarter or another. Not for a moment was he shaken; even under these starless skies his faith never drooped. 'The public mischief,' he wrote to Lord Acton (Dec. 27, 1890), 'ought to put out of view every private thought. But the blow to me is very heavy—the heaviest I ever have received. It is a great and high call to walk by faith and not by sight.'

Occasion had already offered for testing the feeling of Ireland. There was a vacancy in the representation of Kilkenny, and the Parnellite candidate had been defeated.

To J. Morley.

Hawarden, Dec. 23, 1890.—Since your letter arrived this morning, the Kilkenny poll has brightened the sky. It will have a great effect in Ireland, although it is said not to be a representative constituency, but one too much for us. It is a great gain; and yet sad enough to think that even here one-third of the voters should be either rogues or fools. I suppose the ballot has largely contributed to save Kilkenny. It will be most interesting to learn how the tories voted.

I return your enclosure. . . . I have ventured, without asking your leave, on keeping a copy of a part. Only in one proposition do I differ from you. I would rather see Ireland disunited than see it Parnellite.

I think that as the atmosphere is quiet for the moment we had better give ourselves the benefit of a little further time for reflection. Personally, I am hard hit. My course of life was daring enough as matters stood six weeks ago. How it will shape in the new situation I cannot tell. But this is the selfish part. Turning for a moment to the larger outlook, I am extremely indisposed to any harking back in the matter of home rule; we are now, I think, freed from the enormous danger of seeing P. master in Ireland; division and its consequences in

diminishing force, are the worst we have to fear. What my mind leans to in a way still vague is to rally ourselves by some affirmative legislation taken up by and on behalf of the party. Something of this kind would be the best source to look to for reparative strength.

To Lord Acton.

Jan. 9, 1891.—To a greybeard in a hard winter the very name of the south is musical, and the kind letters from you and Lord Hampden make it harmony as well as melody. But I have been and am chained to the spot by this Parnell business, and every day have to consider in one shape or other what ought to be said by myself or others. . . . I consider the Parnell chapter of politics finally closed for us, the British liberals, at least during my time. He has been even worse since the divorce court than he was in it. The most astounding revelation of my lifetime.

To J. Morley.

Hawarden, Dec. 30, 1890.—I must not longer delay thanking you for your most kind and much valued letter on my birthday—a birthday more formidable than usual, on account of the recent disasters, which, however, may all come to good. If I am able to effect in the world anything useful, be assured I know how much of it is owed to the counsel and consort of my friends.

It is not indeed the common lot of man to make serious additions to the friendships which so greatly help us in this pilgrimage, after seventy-six years old; but I rejoice to think that in your case it has been accomplished for me.

VIII

A few more sentences will end this chapter in Mr. Gladstone's life. As we have seen, an election took place in the closing days of December 1890. Mr. Parnell flung himself into the contest with frantic activity. A fierce conflict ended in the defeat of his candidate by nearly two to one.[1] Three months later a contest occurred in Sligo. Here again, though he had strained every nerve in the interval as well as in the immediate struggle, his candidate was beaten.[2] Another three months, then a third election at Carlow,—with the same result, the rejection of Mr. Parnell's man by a majority of much more than two to one.[3] It was in vain that his adherents denounced those who had left him as mutineers and helots, and exalted him as 'truer than Tone, abler than Grattan, greater than O'Connell, full of love for Ireland as Thomas Davis himself.' On the other side, he encountered antagonism in every key, from pathetic remonstrance or earnest reprobation, down to an unsparing fury that savoured of the ruthless factions of the Seine. In America almost every name of consideration was hostile.

Yet undaunted by repulse upon repulse, he tore over from England to Ireland and back again, week after week and

[1] December 23, 1890. [2] April 3, 1891. [3] July 8, 1891.

month after month, hoarse and haggard, seamed by sombre passions, waving the shreds of a tattered flag. Ireland must have been a hell on earth to him. To those Englishmen who could not forget that they had for so long been his fellow-workers, though they were now the mark of his attack, these were dark and desolating days. No more lamentable chapter is to be found in all the demented scroll of aimless and untoward things, that seem as if they made up the history of Ireland. It was not for very long. The last speech that Mr. Parnell ever made in England was at Newcastle-on-Tyne in July 1891, when he told the old story about the liberal leaders, of whom he said that there was but one whom he trusted. A few weeks later, not much more than ten months after the miserable act had opened, the Veiled Shadow stole upon the scene, and the world learned that Parnell was no more.[1]

[1] October 6. He was in his forty-sixth year (*b.* June 1846), and had been sixteen years in parliament.

CHAPTER VI

BIARRITZ

(*1891–1892*)

Omnium autem ineptiarum, quæ sunt innumerabiles, haud sciam an nulla sit major, quam, ut illi solent, quocunque in loco, quoscunque inter homines visum est, de rebus aut difficillimis aut non necessariis argutissime disputare.—CICERO.

Of all the numberless sorts of bad taste and want of tact, perhaps the worst is to insist, no matter where you are or with whom you are, on arguing about the hardest subjects to the full pitch of elaboration and detail.

WE have seen how in 1889 Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of one of the most devoted and successful marriages that ever were made, and the unbroken felicity of their home. In 1891, after the shadows of approaching calamity had for many months hung doubtfully over them, a heavy blow fell, and their eldest son died. Not deeply concerned in ordinary politics, he was a man of many virtues and some admirable gifts; he was an accomplished musician, and I have seen letters of his to his father, marked by a rare delicacy of feeling and true power of expression. 'I had known him for nearly thirty years,' one friend wrote, 'and there was no man, until his long illness, who had changed so little, or retained so long the best qualities of youth, and my first thought was that the greater the loss to you, the greater would be the consolation.'

To Archbishop Benson, Mr. Gladstone wrote (July 6):—

It is now forty-six years since we lost a child,[1] and he who has now passed away from our eyes, leaves to us only blessed recollections. I suppose all feel that those deaths which reverse the order of nature have a sharpness of their own. But setting this apart, there is nothing lacking to us in consolations human or divine. I can only wish that I may become less unworthy to have been his father.

To me he wrote (July 10):—

We feel deeply the kindness and tenderness of your letter. It supplies one more link in a long chain of recollection which I deeply prize. Yes, ours is a tribulation, and a sore one, but yet we feel we ought to

[1] Vol. I. p. 287.

find ourselves carried out of ourselves by sympathy with the wife whose noble and absorbing devotion had become like an entire life of itself, and who is now face to face with the void. The grief of children too, which passes, is very sharp while it remains. The case has been very remarkable. Though with abatement of some powers, my son has not been without many among the signs and comforts of health during a period of nearly two and a half years. All this time the terrible enemy was lodged in the royal seat, and only his healthy and unyielding constitution kept it at defiance, and maintained his mental and inward life intact. . . . And most largely has human, as well as divine compassion, flowed in upon us, from none more conspicuously than from yourself, whom we hope to count among near friends for the short remainder of our lives.

To another correspondent who did not share his own religious beliefs, he said (July 5) :—

When I received your last kind note, I fully intended to write to you with freedom on the subject of *The Agnostic Island*. But since then I have been at close quarters, so to speak, with the dispensations of God, for yesterday morning my dearly beloved eldest son was taken from the sight of our eyes. At this moment of bleeding hearts, I will only say what I hope you will in consideration of the motives take without offence, namely this : I would from the bottom of my heart that whenever the hour of bereavement shall befall you or those whom you love, you and they may enjoy the immeasurable consolation of believing, with all the mind and all the heart, that the beloved one is gone into eternal rest, and that those who remain behind may through the same mighty Deliverer hope at their appointed time to rejoin him.

All this language on the great occasions of human life was not with him the tone of convention. Whatever the synthesis, as they call it,—whatever the form, whatever the creed and faith may be, he was one of that high and favoured household who, in Emerson's noble phrase, 'live from a great depth of being.'

Earlier in the year Lord Granville, who so long had been his best friend, died. The loss by his death was severe. As Acton, who knew of their relations well and from within, wrote to Mr. Gladstone (April 1) :—

There was an admirable fitness in your union, and I had been able to watch how it became closer and easier, in spite of so much to separate you, in mental habits, in early affinities, and even in the form of fundamental convictions, since he came home from your budget, overwhelmed, thirty-eight years ago. I saw all the connections which had their root in social habit fade before the one which took its rise from public life and proved more firm and more enduring than the rest.

II

In September he paid a visit to his relatives at Fasque, and thence he went to Glenalmond—spots that in his tenacious memory must have awakened hosts of old and dear associations. On October 1, he found himself after a long and busy day, at

Newcastle-on-Tyne, where he had never stayed since his too memorable visit in 1862.[1] Since the defeat of the Irish policy in 1886, he had attended the annual meeting of the chief liberal organization at Nottingham (1887), Birmingham (1888), and Manchester (1889). This year it was the turn of Newcastle. On October 2, he gave his blessing to various measures that afterwards came to be known as the Newcastle programme. After the shock caused by the Irish quarrel, every politician knew that it would be necessary to balance home rule by reforms expected in England and Scotland. No liberal, whatever his particular shade, thought that it would be either honourable or practical to throw the Irish policy overboard, and if there were any who thought such a course honourable, they knew it would not be safe. The principle and expediency of home rule had taken a much deeper root in the party than it suited some of the trimming tribe later to admit. On the other hand, after five years of pretty exclusive devotion to the Irish case, to pass by the British case and its various demands for an indefinite time longer, would have been absurd.

III

In the eighties Mr. Gladstone grew into close friendship with one who had for many years been his faithful supporter in the House of Commons as member for Dundee. Nobody ever showed him devotion more considerate, loyal, and unselfish than did Mr. Armitstead, from about the close of the parliament of 1880 down to the end of this story.[2] In the middle of December 1891 Mr. Armitstead planned a foreign trip for his hero, and persuaded me to join. Biarritz was to be our destination, and the expedition proved a wonderful success. Some notes of mine, though intended only for domestic consumption, may help to bring Mr. Gladstone in his easiest moods before the reader's eye. No new ideas struck fire, no particular contribution was made to grand themes. But a great statesman on a holiday may be forgiven for not trying to discover bran-new keys to philosophy, history, and 'all the mythologies.' As a sketch from life of the veteran's buoyancy, vigour, genial freshness of heart and brain, after four-score strenuous years, these few pages may be found of interest.

We left Paris at nine in the morning (Dec. 16), and were listening to the swell of the mighty Bay resounding under our windows at Biarritz soon after midnight.

The long day's journey left no signs of fatigue on either Mr.

[1] See above, vol. i. p. 531.

[2] Once Mr. Gladstone presented him with a piece of plate, and set upon it one of those little Latin inscriptions to which he was so much addicted, and which must serve here instead of further commemoration of a remarkable friendship: Georgio Armitstead, Armigero, D.D. Gul. E. Gladstone. Amicitiæ Benevolentiæ Beneficiorum delatorum Valde memor Mense Augusti A.D., 1894.

or Mrs. Gladstone, and his only regret was that we had not come straight through instead of staying a night in Paris. I'm always for going straight on, he said. For some odd reason in spite of the late hour he was full of stories of American humour, which he told with extraordinary verve and enjoyment. I contributed one that amused him much, of the Bostonian who, having read Shakespeare for the first time, observed, 'I call that a very clever book. Now, I don't suppose there are twenty men in Boston to-day who could have written that book!'

Thursday, Dec. 17.—Splendid morning for making acquaintance with a new place. Saw the western spur of the Pyrenees falling down to the Bidassoa and the first glimpse of the giant wall, beyond which, according to Michelet, Africa begins, and our first glimpse of Spain.

After breakfast we all sallied forth to look into the shops and to see the lie of the land. Mr. G. as interested as a child in all the objects in the shops—many of them showing that we are not far from Spain. The consul very polite, showed us about, and told us the hundred trifles that bring a place really into one's mind. Nothing is like a first morning's stroll in a foreign town. By afternoon the spell dissolves, and the mood comes of Dante's lines, '*Era già l'ora*,' etc.[1]

Some mention was made of Charles Austin, the famous lawyer: it brought up the case of men who are suddenly torn from lives of great activity to complete idleness.

Mr. G.—I don't know how to reconcile it with what I've always regarded as the foundation of character—Bishop Butler's view of habit. How comes it that during the hundreds of years in which priests and fellows of Eton College have retired from hard work to college livings and leisure, not one of them has ever done anything whatever for either scholarship or divinity—not one?

Mr. G. did not know Mazzini, but Armellini, another of the Roman triumvirs, taught him Italian in 1832.

I spoke a word for Gambetta, but he would not have it. 'Gambetta was *autoritaire*; I do not feel as if he were a true liberal in the old and best sense. I cannot forget how hostile he was to the movement for freedom in the Balkans.'

Said he only once saw Lord Liverpool. He went to call on Canning at Glos'ter House (close to our Glos'ter Road Station), and there through a glass door he saw Canning and Lord Liverpool talking together.

Peel.—Had a good deal of temper; not hot; but perhaps sulky. Not a farsighted man, but fairly clear-sighted. 'I called upon him after the election in 1847. The Janissaries, as

[1] Era già l'ora, che volge 'l disio
A' naviganti, e 'ntenerisce 'l cuore
Lo dì ch' han detto a' dolci amici addio, etc.
Purg. viii.

Byron's rendering is well enough known.

Bentinck called us, that is the men who had stood by Peel, had been 110 before the election; we came back only 50. Peel said to me that what he looked forward to was a long and fierce struggle on behalf of protection. I must say I thought this foolish. If Bentinck had lived, with his strong will and dogged industry, there might have been a wide rally for protection, but everybody knew that Dizzy did not care a straw about it, and Derby had not constancy and force enough.'

Mr. G. said Disraeli's performances against Peel were quite as wonderful as report makes them. Peel altogether helpless in reply. Dealt with them with a kind of 'righteous dulness.' The Protectionist secession due to three men: Derby contributed prestige; Bentinck backbone; and Dizzy parliamentary brains.

The golden age of administrative reform was from 1832 to the Crimean War; Peel was always keenly interested in the progress of these reforms.

Northcote.—'He was my private secretary; and one of the very best imaginable; pliant, ready, diligent, quick, acute, with plenty of humour, and a temper simply perfect. But as a leader, I think ill of him; you had a conversation; he saw the reason of your case; and when he left, you supposed all was right. But at the second interview, you always found that he had been unable to persuade his friends. What could be weaker than his conduct on the Bradlaugh affair! You could not wonder that the rank and file of his men should be caught by the proposition that an atheist ought not to sit in Parliament. But what is a leader good for, if he dare not tell his party that in a matter like this they are wrong, and of course nobody knew better than N. that they were wrong. A clever, quick man with fine temper. By the way, how is it that we have no word, no respectable word for backbone?'

J. M.—Character?

Mr. G.—Well, character; yes; but that's vague. It means will, I suppose. (I ought to have thought of Novalis's well-known definition of character as 'a completely fashioned will.')

J. M.—Our inferiority to the Greeks in discriminations of language shown by our lack of precise equivalents for *φρόνησις, σοφία, σωφροσύνη*, etc., of which we used to hear so much when coached in the *Ethics*.

Mr. G. went on to argue that because the Greeks drew these fine distinctions in words, they were superior in conduct. 'You cannot beat the Greeks in noble qualities.'

Mr. G.—I admit there is no Greek word of good credit for the virtue of humility.

J. M.—*ταπεινότης*? But that has an association of meanness.

Mr. G.—Yes; a shabby sort of humility. Humility as a sovereign grace is the creation of Christianity.

Friday, December 18.—Brilliant sunshine, but bitterly cold; an east wind blowing straight from the Maritime Alps. Walk-

ing, reading, talking. Mr. G. after breakfast took me into his room, where he is reading Heine, Butcher on Greek genius, and Marbot. Thought Thiers's well-known remark on Heine's death capital,—'To-day the wittiest Frenchman alive has died.'

Mr. G.—We have talked about the best line in poetry, etc. How do you answer this question—Which century of English history produced the greatest men?

J. M.—What do you say to the sixteenth?

Mr. G.—Yes, I think so. Gardiner was a great man. Henry VIII. was great, But bad. Poor Cranmer. Like Northcote, he'd no backbone. Do you remember Jeremy Collier's sentence about his bravery at the stake, which I count one of the grandest in English prose—'He seemed to repel the force of the fire and to overlook the torture, by strength of thought.'[1] Thucydides could not beat that.

The old man twice declaimed the sentence with deep sonorous voice, and his usual incomparable modulation.

Mr. G. talked of a certain General ——. He was thought to be a first-rate man; neglected nothing, looked to things himself, conceived admirable plans, and at last got an important command. Then to the universal surprise, nothing came of it; ——, they said, 'could do everything that a commander should do, except say, *Quick march*.' There are plenty of politicians of that stamp, but Mr. G. decidedly not one of them. I mentioned a farewell dinner given to —— in the spring, by some rich man or other. It cost £560 for forty-eight guests! Flowers alone £150. Mr. G. on this enormity, recalled a dinner to Talfourd about copyright at the old Clarendon Hotel in Bond Street, and the price was £2, 17s. 6d. a head. The old East India Company used to give dinners at a cost of seven guineas a head. He has a wonderfully lively interest for these matters, and his curiosity as to the prices of things in the shop-windows is inexhaustible. We got round to Goethe. Goethe, he said, never gave prominence to duty.

J. M.—Surely, surely in that fine psalm of life, *Das Göttliche*?

Mr. G.—Döllinger used to confront me with the *Iphigenie* as a great drama of duty.

He wished that I had known Döllinger—'a man thoroughly from beginning to end of his life *purged of self*.' Mistook the nature of the Irish questions, from the erroneous view that Irish catholicism is ultramontane, which it certainly is not.

Saturday, Dec. 19.—* * * * *

What is extraordinary is that all Mr. G.'s versatility, buoyancy, and the rest goes with the most profound accuracy and intense concentration when any point of public business is raised. Something was said of the salaries of bishops. He was ready in an instant with every figure and detail, and every circum-

[1] On some other occasion he set this against Macaulay's praise of a passage in Barrow mentioned above, p. 107.

stance of the history of the foundation of the Ecclesiastical Commission in 1835-6. Then his *savoir faire* and wisdom of parliamentary conduct. 'I always made it a rule in the H. of C. to allow nobody to suppose that I did not like him, and to say as little as I could to prevent anybody from liking me. Considering the intense friction and contention of public life, it is a saving of wear and tear that as many as possible even among opponents should think well of one.'

Sunday, Dec. 20.—At table, a little discussion as to the happiness and misery of animal creation. Outside of man Mr. G. argued against Tennyson's description of Nature as red in tooth and claw. Apart from man, he said, and the action of man, sentient beings are happy and not miserable. But Fear? we said. No; they are unaware of impending doom; when hawk or kite pounces on its prey, the small bird has little or no apprehension; 'tis death, but death by appointed and unforeseen lot.

J. M.—There is Hunger. Is not the probability that most creatures are always hungry, not excepting Man?

To this he rather assented. Of course optimism like this is indispensable as the basis of natural theology.

Talked to Mr. G. about Michelet's Tableau de la France, which I had just finished in vol. 2 of the history. A brilliant tour de force, but strains the relations of soil to character; compels words and facts to be the slaves of his phantasy; the modicum of reality overlaid with violent paradox and foregone conclusion. Mr. G. not very much interested—seems only to care for political and church history.

Monday, Dec. 21.—Mr. G. did not appear at table to-day, suffering from a surfeit of wild strawberries the day before. But he dined in his dressing-gown, and I had some chat with him in his room after lunch.

Mr. G.—'Tis a hard law of political things that if a man shows special competence in a department, that is the very thing most likely to keep him there, and prevent his promotion.'

Mr. G.—I consider Burke a tripartite man: America, France, Ireland—right as to two, wrong in one.

J. M.—Must you not add home affairs and India? His *Thoughts on the Discontents* is a masterpiece of civil wisdom, and the right defence in a great constitutional struggle. Then he gave fourteen years of industry to Warren Hastings, and teaching England the rights of the natives, princes and people, and her own duties. So he was right in four out of five.

Mr. G.—Yes, yes—quite true. Those two ought to be added to my three. There is a saying of Burke's from which I must utterly dissent. 'Property is sluggish and inert.' Quite the contrary. Property is vigilant, active, sleepless; if ever it seems to slumber, be sure that one eye is open.

Marie Antoinette.—I once read the three volumes of letters

from Mercy d'Argenteau to Maria Theresa. He seems to have performed the duty imposed upon him with fidelity.

J. M.—Don't you think the Empress comes out well in the correspondence?

Mr. G.—Yes, she shows always judgment and sagacity.

J. M.—Ah, but besides sagacity, worth and as much integrity as those slippery times allowed.

Mr. G.—Yes (but rather reluctantly, I thought). As for Marie Antoinette, she was not a striking character in any sense; she was horribly frivolous; and, I suppose, we must say she was, what shall I call it—a very considerable flirt?

J. M.—The only case with real foundation seems to be that of the *beau Fersen*, the Swedish secretary. He too came to as tragic an end as the Queen.

Tuesday, Dec. 22.—Mr. G. still somewhat indisposed—but reading away all day long. Full of Marbot. Delighted with the story of the battle of Castiglione: how when Napoleon held a council of war, and they all said they were hemmed in, and that their only chance was to back out, Augereau roughly cried that they might all do what they liked, but he would attack the enemy cost what it might. 'Exactly like a place in the *Iliad*; when Agamemnon and the rest sit sorrowful in the assembly arguing that it was useless to withstand the sovereign will of Zeus, and that they had better flee into their ships, Diomed bursts out that whatever others think, in any event he and Sthenelus, his squire, will hold firm, and never desist from the onslaught until they have laid waste the walls of Troy.'[1] A large dose of Diomed in Mr. G. himself.

Talk about the dangerous isolation in which the monarchy will find itself in England if the hereditary principle goes down in the House of Lords; 'it will stand bare, naked, with no shelter or shield, only endured as the better of two evils.' 'I once asked,' he said, 'who besides myself in the party cares for the hereditary principle? The answer was, That perhaps —— cared for it!!'—naming a member of the party supposed to be rather sapient than sage.

News in the paper that the Comte de Paris in his discouragement was about to renounce his claims, and break up his party. Somehow this brought us round to Tocqueville, of whom Mr. G. spoke as the nearest French approach to Burke.

J. M.—But pale and without passion. Who was it that said of him that he was an aristocrat who accepted his defeat? That is, he knew democracy to be the conqueror, but he doubted how far it would be an improvement, he saw its perils, etc.

Mr. G.—I have not much faith in these estimates, whether in favour of progress or against it. I don't believe in comparisons of age with age. How can a man strike a balance between one government and another? How can he place

[1] *Iliad*, ix. 32.

himself in such an attitude, and with such comprehensive sureness of vision, as to say that the thirteenth century was better or higher or worse or lower than the nineteenth?

Thursday, Dec. 24.—At lunch we had the news of the Parnellite victory at Waterford. A disagreeable reverse for us. Mr. G. did not say many words about it, only that it would give heart to the mischief makers—only too certain. But we said no more about it. He and I took a walk on the sands in the afternoon, and had a curious talk (considering), about the prospects of the church of England. He was anxious to know about my talk some time ago with the Bishop of —— whom I had met at a feast at Lincoln's Inn. I gave him as good an account as I could of what had passed. Mr. G. doubted that this prelate was fundamentally an Erastian, as Tait was. Mr. G. is eager to read the signs of the times as to the prospects of anglican Christianity, to which his heart is given; and he fears the peril of Erastianism to the spiritual life of the church, which is naturally the only thing worth caring about. Hence, he talked with much interest of the question whether the clever fellows at Oxford and Cambridge now take orders. He wants to know what kind of defenders his church is likely to have in days to come. Said that for the first time interest has moved away both from politics and theology, towards the vague something which they call social reform; and he thinks they won't make much out of that in the way of permanent results. The establishment he considers safer than it has been for a long time.

As to Welsh disestablishment, he said it was a pity that where the national sentiment was so unanimous as it was in Wales, the operation itself should not be as simple as in Scotland. In Scotland sentiment is not unanimous, but the operation is easy. In Wales sentiment is all one way, but the operation difficult—a good deal more difficult than people suppose, as they will find out when they come to tackle it.

[Perhaps it may be mentioned here that, though we always talked freely and abundantly together upon ecclesiastical affairs and persons, we never once exchanged a word upon theology or religious creed, either at Biarritz or anywhere else.]

Pitt.—A strong denunciation of Pitt for the French war. People don't realise what the French war meant. In 1812 wheat at Liverpool was 20s. (?) the imperial bushel of 65 pounds (?)! Think of that, when you bring it into figures of the cost of a loaf. And that was the time when Eaton, Eastnor, and other great palaces were built by the landlords out of the high rents which the war and war prices enabled them to exact.

Wished we knew more of Melbourne. He was in many ways a very fine fellow. 'In two of the most important of all the relations of a prime minister, he was perfect; I mean first, his relations to the Queen, second to his colleagues.'

Somebody at dinner quoted a capital description of the perverse fashion of talking that prevailed at Oxford soon after my time, and prevails there now, I fancy—'hunting for epigrammatic ways of saying what you don't think.' —— was the father of this pestilent mode.

Rather puzzled him by repeating a saying of mine that used to amuse Fitzjames Stephen, that Love of Truth is more often than we think only a fine name for Temper. I think Mr. G. has a thorough dislike for anything that has a cynical or sardonic flavour about it. I wish I had thought, by the way, of asking him what he had to say of that piece of Swift's, about all objects being insipid that do not come by delusion, and everything being shrunken as it appears in the glass of nature, so that if it were not for artificial mediums, refracted angles, false lights, varnish and tinsel, there would be pretty much of a level in the felicity of mortal man.

Am always feeling how strong is his aversion to seeing more than he can help of what is sordid, mean, ignoble. He has not been in public life all these years without rubbing shoulders with plenty of baseness on every scale, and plenty of pettiness in every hue, but he has always kept his eyes well above it. Never was a man more wholly free of the starch of the censor, more ready to make allowance, nor more indulgent even; he enters into human nature in all its compass. But he won't linger a minute longer than he must in the dingy places of life and character.

Christmas Day, 1891.—A divine day, brilliant sunshine, and mild spring air. Mr. G. heard what he called an admirable sermon from an English preacher, 'with a great command of his art.' A quietish day, Mr. G. no doubt engaged in *φρονεῖν τὰ ὅσια*.

Saturday, Dec. 26.—Once more a noble day. We started in a couple of carriages for the Négress station, a couple of miles away or more, I with the G.'s. Occasion produced the Greek epitaph of the nameless drowned sailor who wished for others kinder seas.[1] Mr. G. felt its pathos and its noble charm—so direct and simple, such benignity, such a good lesson to men to forget their own misdeeds and mischance, and to pray for the passer-by a happier star. He repaid me by two epigrams of a different vein, and one admirable translation into Greek, of Tennyson on Sir John Franklin, which I do not carry in my mind; another on a boisterous Eton fellow—

Didactic, dry, declamatory, dull,
The bursar —— bellows like a bull.

Just in the tone of Greek epigram, a sort of point, but not too much point.

[1] ναυτίλε, μὴ πείθου τίνος ἐνθάδε τύμβος ὅδ' εἰμί,
ἀλλ' αὐτὸς πόντου τύγχανε χρηστοτέρου.

'Ask not, mariner, whose tomb I am here, but be thine own fortune a kinder sea.'
—MACKAIL.

Parliamentary Wit.—Thought Disraeli had never been surpassed, nor even equalled, in this line. He had a contest with General Grey, who stood upon the general merits of the whig government, after both Lord Grey and Stanley had left it. D. drew a picture of a circus man who advertised his show with its incomparable team of six grey horses. One died, he replaced it by a mule. Another died, and he put in a donkey, still he went on advertising his team of greys all the same. Canning's wit not to be found conspicuously in his speeches, but highly agreeable pleasantries, though many of them in a vein which would jar horribly on modern taste.

Some English redcoats and a pack of hounds passed us as we neared the station. They saluted Mr. G. with a politeness that astonished him, but was pleasant. Took the train for Irun, the fields and mountain slopes delightful in the sun, and the sea on our right a superb blue such as we never see in English waters. At Irun we found carriages waiting to take us on to Fuentarabia. From the balcony of the church had a beautiful view over the scene of Wellington's operations when he crossed the Bidassoa, in the presence of the astonished Soult. A lovely picture, made none the worse by this excellent historic association. The alcalde was extremely polite and intelligent. The consul who was with us showed a board on the old tower, in which *v* in some words was *b*, and I noted that the alcalde spoke of Viarritz. I reminded Mr. G. of Scaliger's epigram—

> Haud temere antiquas mutat Vasconia voces,
> Cui nihil est aliud vivere quam bibere.

Pretty cold driving home, but Mr. G. seemed not to care. He found both the churches at St. Jean and at Fuentarabia very noteworthy, though the latter very popish, but both he felt, 'had a certain association with grandeur.'

Sunday, Dec. 27.—After some quarter of an hour of travellers' topics, we plunged into one of the most interesting talks we have yet had. *Apropos* of I do not know what, Mr. G. said that he had not advised his son to enter public life. 'No doubt there are some men to whom station, wealth, and family traditions make it a duty. But I have never advised any individual, as to whom I have been consulted, to enter the H. of C.'

J. M.—But isn't that rather to encourage self-indulgence? Nobody who cares for ease or mental composure would seek public life?

Mr. G.—Ah, I don't know that. Surely politics open up a great field for the natural man. Self-seeking, pride, domination, power—all these passions are gratified in politics.

J. M.—You cannot be sure of achievement in politics, whether personal or public?

Mr. G.—No; to use Bacon's pregnant phrase, they are too immersed in matter. Then as new matter, that is, new details and particulars, come into view, men change their judgment.

J. M.—You have spoken just now of somebody as a thorough good tory. You know the saying that nobody is worth much who has not been a bit of a radical in his youth, and a bit of a tory in his fuller age.

Mr. G. (laughing)—Ah, I'm afraid that hits me rather hard. But for myself, I think I can truly put up all the change that has come into my politics into a sentence; I was brought up to distrust and dislike liberty, I learned to believe in it. That is the key to all my changes.

J. M.—According to my observation, the change in my own generation is different. They have ceased either to trust or to distrust liberty, and have come to the mind that it matters little either way. Men are disenchanted. They have got what they wanted in the days of their youth, yet what of it, they ask? France has thrown off the Empire, but the statesmen of the republic are not a great breed. Italy has gained her unity, yet unity has not been followed by thrift, wisdom, or large increase of public virtue or happiness. America has purged herself of slavery, yet life in America is material, prosaic,—so say some of her own rarest sons. Don't think that I say all these things. But I know able and high-minded men who suffer from this disenchantment.

Mr. G.—Italy would have been very different if Cavour had only lived—and even Ricasoli. Men ought not to suffer from disenchantment. They ought to know that *ideals in politics are never realised.* And don't let us forget in eastern Europe the rescue in our time of some ten millions of men from the harrowing domination of the Turk. (On this he expatiated, and very justly, with much energy.)

We turned to our own country. Here he insisted that democracy had certainly not saved us from a distinct decline in the standard of public men. . . . Look at the whole conduct of opposition from '80 to '85—every principle was flung overboard, if they could manufacture a combination against the government. For all this deterioration one man and one man alone is responsible, Disraeli. He is the grand corrupter. He it was who sowed the seed.

J. M.—Ought not Palmerston to bear some share in this?

Mr. G.—No, no; Pam. had many strong and liberal convictions. On one subject Dizzy had them too—the Jews. There he was much more than rational, he was fanatical. He said once that Providence would deal good or ill fortune to nations, according as they dealt well or ill by the Jews. I remember once sitting next to John Russell when D. was making a speech on Jewish emancipation. 'Look at him,' said J. R., 'how manfully he sticks to it, tho' he knows that every word he says is gall and wormwood to every man who sits around him and behind him.' A curious irony, was it not, that it should have fallen to me to propose a motion for a memorial both to Pam. and Dizzy?

A superb scene upon the ocean, with a grand wind from the west. Mr. G. and I walked on the shore; he has a passion for tumultuous seas. I have never seen such huge masses of water, shattering themselves among the rocks.

In the evening Mr. G. remarked on our debt to Macaulay, for guarding the purity of the English tongue. I recalled a favourite passage from Milton, that next to the man who gives wise and intrepid counsels of government, he places the man who cares for the purity of his mother tongue. Mr. G. liked this. Said he only knew Bright once slip into an error in this respect, when he used 'transpire' for 'happen.' Macaulay of good example also in rigorously abstaining from the inclusion of matter in footnotes. Hallam an offender in this respect. I pointed out that he offended in company with Gibbon.

Monday, Dec. 28.—We had an animated hour at breakfast.

Oxford and Cambridge.—Curious how, like two buckets, whenever one was up, the other was down. Cambridge has never produced four such men of action in successive ages as Wolsey, Laud, Wesley, and Newman.

J. M.—In the region of thought Cambridge has produced the greatest of all names, Newton.

Mr. G.—In the earlier times Oxford has it—with Wycliff, Occam, above all Roger Bacon. And then in the eighteenth century, Butler.

J. M.—But why not Locke, too, in the century before?

This brought on a tremendous tussle, for Mr. G. was of the same mind, and perhaps for the same sort of reason, as Joseph de Maistre, that contempt for Locke is the beginning of knowledge. All very well for De Maistre, but not for a man in line with European liberalism. I pressed the very obvious point that you must take into account not only a man's intellectual product or his general stature, but also his influence as a historic force. From the point of view of influence Locke was the origin of the emancipatory movement of the eighteenth century abroad, and laid the philosophic foundations of liberalism in civil government at home. Mr. G. insisted on a passage of Hume's which he believed to be in the history, disparaging Locke as a metaphysical thinker.[1] 'That may be,' said I, 'though Hume in his *Essays* is not above paying many compliments to "the great reasoner," etc., to whom, for that matter, I fancy that he stood in pretty direct relation. But far be it from me to deny that Hume saw deeper than Locke into the metaphysical millstone. That is not the point. I'm only thinking of his historic place, and, after all, the history of philosophy is itself a philosophy.' To minds nursed in dogmatic schools, all this is both unpalatable and incredible.

Somehow we slid into the freedom of the will and Jonathan Edwards. I told him that Mill had often told us how Edwards

[1] I have not succeeded in hitting on the passage in the *History*.

argued the necessarian or determinist case as keenly as any modern.

Tuesday, Dec. 29.—Mr. G. 82 to-day. I gave him Mackail's Greek Epigrams, and if it affords him half as much pleasure as it has given me, he will be very grateful. Various people brought Mr. G. bouquets and addresses. Mr. G. went to church in the morning, and in the afternoon took a walk with me. . . . *Land Question.* As you go through France you see the soil cultivated by the population. In our little dash into Spain the other day, we saw again the soil cultivated by the population. In England it is cultivated by the capitalist, for the farmer is capitalist. Some astonishing views recently propounded by D. of Argyll on this matter. Unearned increment—so terribly difficult to catch it. Perhaps best try to get at it through the death duties. Physical condition of our people—always a subject of great anxiety—their stature, colour, and so on. Feared the atmosphere of cotton factories, etc., very deleterious. As against bad air, I said, you must set good food; the Lancashire operative in decent times lives uncommonly well, as he deserves to do. He agreed there might be something in this.

The day was humid and muggy, but the tumult of the sea was most majestic. Mr. G. delighted in it. He has a passion for the sound of the sea; would like to have it in his ear all day and all night. Again and again he recurred to this.

After dinner, long talk about Mazzini, of whom Mr. G. thought poorly in comparison with Poerio and the others who for freedom sacrificed their lives. I stood up for Mazzini, as one of the most morally impressive men I had ever known, or that his age knew; he breathed a soul into democracy.

Then we fell into a discussion as to the eastern and western churches. He thought the western popes by their proffered alliance with the mahometans, etc., had betrayed Christianity in the east. I offered De Maistre's view.

Mr. G. strongly assented to old Chatham's dictum that vacancy is worse than even the most anxious work. He has less to reproach himself with than most men under that head.

He repeated an observation that I have heard him make before, that he thought politicians are more *rapid* than other people. I told him that Bowen once said to me on this that he did not agree; that he thought rapidity the mark of all successful men in the practical line of life, merchants and stockbrokers, etc.

Wednesday, Dec. 30.—A very muggy day. A divine sunset, with the loveliest pink and opal tints in the sky. Mr. G. reading Gleig's *Subaltern.* Not a very entertaining book in itself, but the incidents belong to Wellington's Pyrenean campaign, and, for my own part, I rather enjoyed it on the principle on which one likes reading *Romola* at Florence, *Transformation* at Rome, *Sylvia's Lovers* at Whitby, and *Hurrish* on the northern edge of Clare.

Thursday, Dec. 31.—Down to the pier, and found all the party watching the breakers, and superb they were. Mr. G. exulting in the huge force of the Atlantic swell and the beat of the rollers on the shore, like a Titanic pulse.

After dinner Mr. G. raised the question of payment of members. He had been asked by somebody whether he meant at Newcastle to indicate that everybody should be paid, or only those who chose to take it or to ask for it. He produced the same extraordinary plan as he had described to me on the morning of his Newcastle speech—*i.e.* that the Inland Revenue should ascertain from their own books the income of every M.P., and if they found any below the limit of exemption, should notify the same to the Speaker, and the Speaker should thereupon send to the said M.P. below the limit an annual cheque for, say, £300, the name to appear in an annual return to Parliament of all the M.P.'s in receipt of public money on any grounds whatever. I demurred to this altogether, as drawing an invidious distinction between paid and unpaid members; said it was idle to ignore the theory on which the demand for paid members is based, namely, that it is desirable in the public interest that poor men should have access to the H. of C.; and that the poor man should stand there on the same footing as anybody else.

Friday, Jan. 1, 1892.—After breakfast Mrs. Gladstone came to my room and said how glad she was that I had not scrupled to put unpleasant points; that Mr. G. must not be shielded and sheltered as some great people are, who hear all the pleasant things and none of the unpleasant; that the perturbation from what is disagreeable only lasts an hour. I said I hoped that I was faithful with him, but of course I could not be always putting myself in an attitude of perpetual controversy. She said, 'He is never made angry by what you say.' And so she went away, and —— and I had a good and most useful set-to about Irish finance.

At luncheon Mr. G. asked what we had made out of our morning's work. When we told him, he showed a good deal of impatience and vehemence, and, to my dismay, he came upon union finance and the general subject of the treatment of Ireland by England. . . .

In the afternoon we took a walk, he and I, afterwards joined by the rest. He was as delighted as ever with the swell of the waves, as they bounded over one another, with every variety of grace and tumultuous power. He wondered if we had not more and better words for the sea than the French—'breaker,' 'billow,' 'roller,' as against 'flot,' 'vague,' 'onde,' 'lame,' etc.

At dinner he asked me whether I had made up my mind on the burning question of compulsory Greek for a university degree. I said, No, that as then advised I was half inclined to be against compulsory Greek, but it is so important that I

would not decide before I was obliged. 'So with me,' he said, 'the question is one with many subtle and deep-reaching consequences.' He dwelt on the folly of striking Italian out of the course of modern education, thus cutting European history in two, and setting an artificial gulf between the ancient and modern worlds.

Saturday, Jan. 2.—Superb morning, and all the better for being much cooler. At breakfast somebody started the idle topic of quill pens. When they came to the length of time that so-and-so made a quill serve, 'De Retz,' said I, 'made up his mind that Cardinal Chigi was a poor creature, *maximus in minimis*, because at their first interview Chigi boasted that he had used one pen for three years.' That recalled another saying of Retz's about Cromwell's famous dictum, that nobody goes so far as the man who does not know where he is going. Mr. G. gave his deep and eager Ah! to this. He could not recall that Cromwell had produced many dicta of such quality. 'I don't love him, but he was a mighty big fellow. But he was intolerant. He was intolerant of the episcopalians.'

Mr. G.—Do you know whom I find the most tolerant churchman of that time? *Laud!* Laud got Davenant made Bishop of Salisbury, and he zealously befriended Chillingworth and Hales. (There was some other case, which I forget.)

The execution of Charles.—I told him of Gardiner's new volume which I had just been reading. 'Charles,' he said, 'was no doubt a dreadful liar; Cromwell perhaps did not always tell the truth; Elizabeth was a tremendous liar.'

J. M.—Charles was not wholly inexcusable, being what he was, for thinking that he had a good game in his hands, by playing off the parliament against the army, etc.

Mr. G.—There was less excuse for cutting off his head than in the case of poor Louis XVI., for Louis was the excuse for foreign invasion.

J. M.—Could you call foreign invasion the intervention of the Scotch?

Mr. G.—Well, not quite. I suppose it is certain that it was Cromwell who cut off Charles's head? Not one in a hundred in the nation desired it.

J. M.—No, nor one in twenty in the parliament. But then, ninety-nine in a hundred in the army.

In the afternoon we all drove towards Bayonne to watch the ships struggle over the bar at high water. As it happened we only saw one pass out, a countryman for Cardiff. A string of others were waiting to go, but a little steamer from Nantes came first, and having secured her station, found she had not force enough to make the bar, and the others remained swearing impatiently behind her. The Nantes steamer was like Ireland. The scene was very fresh and fine, and the cold most exhilarating after the mugginess of the last two or three days.

Mr. G., who has a dizzy head, did not venture on the jetty, but watched things from the sands. He and I drove home together, at a good pace. 'I am inclined,' he said laughingly, 'to agree with Dr. Johnson that there is no pleasure greater than sitting behind four fast-going horses.'[1] Talking of Johnson generally, 'I suppose we may take him as the best product of the eighteenth century.' Perhaps so, but is he its most characteristic product?

Wellington.—Curious that there should be no general estimate of W.'s character; his character not merely as a general but as a man. No love of freedom. His sense of duty very strong, but military rather than civil.

Montalembert.—Had often come into contact with him. A very amiable and attractive man. But less remarkable than Rio.

Latin Poets.—Would you place Virgil first?

J. M.—Oh, no, Lucretius much the first for the greatest and sublimest of poetic qualities. Mr. G. seemed to assent to this, though disposed to make a fight for the second *Aeneid* as equal to anything. He expressed his admiration for Catullus, and then he was strong that Horace would run anybody else very hard, breaking out with the lines about Regulus—

> 'Atqui sciebat quæ sibi barbarus
> Tortor pararet;' etc.[2]

Blunders in Government.—How right Napoleon was when he said, reflecting on all the vast complexities of government, that the best to be said of a statesman is that he has avoided the biggest blunders.

It is not easy to define the charm of these conversations. Is charm the right word? They are in the highest degree stimulating, bracing, widening. That is certain. I return to my room with the sensations of a man who has taken delightful exercise in fresh air. He is so wholly free from the *ergoteur*. There's all the difference between the *ergoteur* and the great debater. He fits his tone to the thing; he can be as playful as anybody. In truth I have many a time seen him in London and at Hawarden not far from trivial. But here at Biarritz all is appropriate, and though, as I say, he can be playful and gay as youth, he cannot resist rising in an instant to the general point of view—to grasp the elemental considerations of character, history, belief, conduct, affairs. There he is at home, there he is most himself. I never knew anybody less guilty of the tiresome sin of arguing for victory. It is not his knowledge that attracts; it is not his ethical tests and standards; it is not that dialectical strength of arm which, as Mark Pattison said of him, could twist a bar of iron to its purpose. It is the

[1] Boswell, March 21, 1776. Repeated, with a very remarkable qualification, Sept. 19, 1777. Birkbeck Hill's edition, iii. p. 162.

[2] *Carm.* iii. 5.

combination of these with elevation, with true sincerity, with extraordinary mental force.

Sunday, Jan. 3.—Vauvenargues is right when he says that to carry through great undertakings, one must act as though one could never die. My wonderful companion is a wonderful illustration. He is like M. Angelo, who, just before he died on the very edge of ninety, made an allegorical figure, and inscribed upon it, *ancora impara*, 'still learning.'

At dinner he showed in full force.

Heroes of the Old Testament.—He could not honestly say that he thought there was any figure in the O.T. comparable to the heroes of Homer. Moses was a fine fellow. But the others were of secondary quality—not great high personages, of commanding nature.

Thinkers.—Rather an absurd word—to call a man a thinker (and he repeated the word with gay mockery in his tone). When did it come into use? Not until quite our own times, eh? I said, I believed both Hobbes and Locke spoke of thinkers, and was pretty sure that *penseur*, as in *libre penseur*, had established itself in the last century. [Quite true; Voltaire used it, but it was not common.]

Dr. Arnold.—A high, large, impressive figure—perhaps more important by his character and personality than his actual work. I mentioned M. A.'s poem on his father, *Rugby Chapel*, with admiration. Rather to my surprise, Mr. G. knew the poem well, and shared my admiration to the full. This brought us on to poetry generally, and he expatiated with much eloquence and sincerity for the rest of the talk. The wonderful continuity of fine poetry in England for five whole centuries, stretching from Chaucer to Tennyson, always a proof to his mind of the soundness, the sap, and the vitality of our nation and its character. What people, beginning with such a poet as Chaucer 500 years ago, could have burst forth into such astonishing production of poetry as marked the first quarter of the century, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, etc.

J. M.—It is true that Germany has nothing, save Goethe, Schiller, Heine, that's her whole list. But I should say a word for the poetic movement in France: Hugo, Gautier, etc. Mr. G. evidently knew but little, or even nothing, of modern French poetry. He spoke up for Leopardi, on whom he had written an article first introducing him to the British public, ever so many years ago—in the *Quarterly*.

Mr. G.—Wordsworth used occasionally to dine with me when I lived in the Albany. A most agreeable man. I always found him amiable, polite, and sympathetic. Only once did he jar upon me, when he spoke slightingly of Tennyson's first performance.

J. M.—But he was not so wrong as he would be now. Tennyson's Juvenilia are terribly artificial.

Mr. G.—Yes, perhaps. Tennyson has himself withdrawn some of them. I remember W., when he dined with me, used on leaving to change his silk stockings in the ante-room and put on grey worsted.

J. M.—I once said to M. Arnold that I'd rather have been Wordsworth than anybody [not exactly a modest ambition]; and Arnold, who knew him well in the Grasmere country, said, 'Oh no, you would not; you would wish you were dining with me at the Athenæum. He was too much of the peasant for you.'

Mr. G.—No, I never felt that; I always thought him a polite and an amiable man.

Mentioned Macaulay's strange judgment in a note in the *History*, that Dryden's famous lines,

> '. . . Fool'd with hope, men favour the deceit;
> Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay.
> To-morrow 's falser than the former day;
> Lies worse, and while it says we shall be blest
> With some new joys, cuts off what we possest.
> Strange cozenage! . . .'

are as fine as any eight lines in Lucretius. Told him of an excellent remark of —— on this, that Dryden's passage wholly lacks the mystery and great superhuman air of Lucretius. Mr. G. warmly agreed.

He regards it as a remarkable sign of the closeness of the church of England to the roots of life and feeling in the country, that so many clergymen should have written so much good poetry. Who, for instance? I asked. He named Heber, Moultrie, Newman (*Dream of Gerontius*), and Faber in at least one good poem, 'The poor Labourer' (or some such title), Charles Tennyson. I doubt if this thesis has much body in it. He was for Shelley as the most musical of all our poets. I told him that I had once asked M. to get Tennyson to write an autograph line for a friend of mine, and Tennyson had sent this:—

> 'Coldly on the dead volcano sleeps the gleam of dying day.'

So I suppose the poet must think well of it himself. 'Tis from the second *Locksley Hall*, and describes a man after passions have gone cool.

Mr. G.—Yes, in melody, in the picturesque, and as apt simile, a fine line.

Had been trying his hand at a translation of his favourite lines of Penelope about Odysseus. Said that, of course, you could translate similes and set passages, but to translate Homer as a whole, impossible. He was inclined, when all is said, to think Scott the nearest approach to a model.

Monday, Jan. 4.—At luncheon, Mr. Gladstone recalled the well-known story of Talleyrand on the death of Napoleon.

The news was brought when T. chanced to be dining with Wellington. 'Quel événement!' they all cried. 'Non, ce n'est pas un événement,' said Talleyrand, 'c'est une nouvelle'—'Tis no event, 'tis a piece of news. 'Imagine such a way,' said Mr. G., 'of taking the disappearance of that colossal man! Compare it with the opening of Manzoni's ode, which makes the whole earth stand still. Yet both points of view are right. In one sense, the giant's death was only news; in another, when we think of his history, it was enough to shake the world.' At the moment, he could not recall Manzoni's words, but at dinner he told me that he had succeeded in piecing them together, and after dinner he went to his room and wrote them down for me on a piece of paper. Curiously enough, he could not recall the passage in his own splendid translation.[1]

Talk about handsome men of the past; Sidney Herbert one of the handsomest and most attractive. But the Duke of Hamilton bore away the palm, as glorious as a Greek god. 'One day in Rotten Row, I said this to the Duchess of C. She set up James Hope-Scott against my Duke. No doubt he had an intellectual element which the Duke lacked.' Then we discussed the best-looking man in the H. of C. to-day. . . .

Duke of Wellington.—Somebody was expatiating on the incomparable position of the Duke; his popularity with kings, with nobles, with common people. Mr. G. remembered that immediately after the formation of Canning's government in 1827, when it was generally thought that he had been most unfairly and factiously treated (as Mr. G. still thinks, always saving Peel) by the Duke and his friends, the Duke made an expedition to the north of England, and had an overwhelming reception. Of course, he was then only twelve years from Waterloo, and yet only four or five years later he had to put up his iron shutters.

Approved a remark that a friend of ours was not simple enough, not ready enough to take things as they come.

Mr. G.—Unless a man has a considerable gift for taking things as they come, he may make up his mind that political life will be sheer torment to him. He must meet fortune in all its moods.

Tuesday, Jan. 5.—After dinner to-day, Mr. G. extraordinarily gay. He had bought a present of silver for his wife. She tried to guess the price, and after the manner of wives in such a case, put the figure provokingly low. Mr. G. then put on the deprecating air of the tradesman with wounded feelings—and it was as capital fun as we could desire. That over, he fell to his backgammon with our host.

Wednesday, Jan. 6.—Mrs. Gladstone eighty to-day! What a marvel. . . .

[1] *Translations by Lyttelton and Gladstone*, p. 166.

Léon Say called to see Mr. G. Long and most interesting conversation about all sorts of aspects of French politics, the concordat, the schools, and all the rest of it.

He illustrated the ignorance of French peasantry as to current affairs. Thiers, long after he had become famous, went on a visit to his native region; and there met a friend of his youth. 'Eh bien,' said his friend, 'tu as fait ton chemin.' 'Mais oui, j'ai fait un peu mon chemin. J'ai été ministre même.' 'Ah, tiens! je ne savais pas que tu étais protestant.'

I am constantly struck by his solicitude for the well-being and right doing of Oxford and Cambridge—'the two eyes of the country.' This connection between the higher education and the general movement of the national mind engages his profound attention, and no doubt deserves such attention in any statesman who looks beyond the mere surface problems of the day. To perceive the bearings of such matters as these, makes Mr. G. a statesman of the highest class, as distinguished from men of clever expedients.

Mr. G. had been reading the Greek epigrams on religion in Mackail; quoted the last of them as illustrating the description of the dead as the inhabitants of the more populous world:—

τῶν ἄπο κήν ζωοῖσιν ἀκηδέα, κεῖτ ἂν ἵκηαι
ἐς πλεόνων, ἔξεις θυμὸν ἐλαφρότερον.[1]

A more impressive epigram contains the same thought, where the old man, leaning on his staff, likens himself to the withered vine on its dry pole, and goes on to ask himself what advantage it would be to warm himself for three or four more years in the sun; and on that reflection without heroics put off his life, and changed his home to the greater company,

κῆς πλεόνων ἦλθε μετοικεσίην.

All the rest of the evening he kept us alive by a stock of infinite drolleries. A scene of a dish of over-boiled tea at West Calder after a meeting, would have made the fortune of a comedian.

I said that in the all-important quality of co-operation, —— was only good on condition of being in front. Mr. G. read him in the same sense. Reminded of a mare he once had—admirable, provided you kept off spur, curb, or whip: show her one of these things, and she would do nothing. Mr. G. more of a judge of men than is commonly thought.

Told us of a Chinese despatch which came under his notice when he was at the board of trade, and gave him food for reflection. A ship laden with grain came to Canton. The administrator wrote to the central government at Pekin to know whether the ship was to pay duty and land its cargo. The answer was

[1] Thou shalt possess thy soul without care among the living, and lighter when thou goest to the place where most are.

to the effect that the central government of the Flowery Land was quite indifferent as a rule to the goings and comings of the Barbarians; whether they brought a cargo or brought no cargo was a thing of supreme unconcern. 'But this cargo, you say, is food for the people. There ought to be no obstacle to the entry of food for the people. So let it in. Your Younger Brother commends himself to you, etc. etc.'

Friday, Jan. 8.—A quiet evening. We were all rather piano at the end of an episode which had been thoroughly delightful. When Mr. G. bade me good-night, he said with real feeling, 'More sorry than I can say that this is our last evening together at Biarritz.' He is painfully grieved to lose the sound of the sea in his ears.

Saturday, Jan. 9.—Strolled about all the forenoon. 'What a time of blessed composure it has been,' said Mr. G. with a heavy sigh. The distant hills covered with snow, and the voice of the storm gradually swelling. Still the savage fury of the sea was yet some hours off, so we had to leave Biarritz without the spectacle of Atlantic rage at its fiercest.

Found comfortable saloon awaiting us at Bayonne, and so under weeping skies we made our way to Pau. The landscape must be pretty, weather permitting. As it was, we saw but little. Mr. G. dozed and read Max Müller's book on Anthropological Religions.

Arrived at Pau towards 5.30: drenching rain; nothing to be seen.

At tea time, a good little discussion raised by a protest against Dante's being praised for a complete survey of human nature and the many phases of human lot. Intensity he has, but insight over the whole field of character and life? Mr. G. did not make any stand against this, and made the curious admission that Dante was too optimist to be placed on a level with Shakespeare, or even with Homer.

Then we turned to lighter themes. He had once said to Henry Taylor, 'I should have thought he was the sort of man to have a good strong grasp of a subject,' speaking of Lord Grey, who had been one of Taylor's many chiefs at the Colonial Office. 'I should have thought,' replied Taylor slowly and with a dreamy look, 'he was the sort of man to have a good strong *nip* of a subject.' Witty, and very applicable to many men.

Wordsworth once gave Mr. G. with much complacency, as an example of his own readiness and resource, this story. A man came up to him at Rydal and said, 'Do you happen to have seen my wife?' 'Why,' replied the Sage, 'I did not know you had a wife!' This peculiarly modest attempt at pointed repartee much tickled Mr. G., as well it might.

Tuesday, Jan. 12.—Mr. G. completely recovered from two days of indisposition. We had about an hour's talk on things

in general, including policy in the approaching session. He did not expect a dissolution, at the same time a dissolution would not surprise him.

At noon they started for Périgord and Carcassonne, Nismes, Arles, and so on to the Riviera full of kind things at our parting.

CHAPTER VII

THE FOURTH ADMINISTRATION

(*1892-1894*)

Τῷ δ' ἤδη δύο μὲν γενεαὶ μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
ἐφθιάθ', οἵ οἱ πρόσθεν ἅμα τράφεν ἠδὲ γένοντο
ἐν Πύλῳ ἡγαθέῃ, μετὰ δὲ τριτάτοισιν ἄνασσεν.
Ilias, i. 250.

Two generations of mortal men had he already seen pass away, who with him of old had been born and bred in sacred Pylos, and among the third generation he held rule.

In 1892 the general election came, after a session that was not very long nor at all remarkable. Everybody knew that we should soon be dismissed, and everybody knew that the liberals would have a majority, but the size of it was beyond prognostication. Mr. Gladstone did not talk much about it, but in fact he reckoned on winning by eighty or a hundred. A leading liberal-unionist at whose table we met (May 24) gave us forty. That afternoon by the way the House had heard a speech of great power and splendour. An Irish tory peer in the gallery said afterwards, 'That old hero of yours is a miracle. When he set off in that high pitch, I said that won't last. Yet he kept it it up all through as grand as ever, and came in fresher and stronger than when he began.' His sight failed him in reading an extract, and he asked me to read it for him, so he sat down amid sympathetic cheers while it was read out from the box.

After listening to a strong and undaunted reply from Mr. Balfour, he asked me to go with him into the tea-room ; he was fresh, unperturbed, and in high spirits. He told me he had once sat at table with Lord Melbourne, but regretted that he had never known him. Said that of the sixty men or so who had been his colleagues in cabinet, the very easiest and most attractive was Clarendon. Constantly regretted that he had never met nor known Sir Walter Scott, as of course he might have done. Thought the effect of diplomacy to be bad on the character ; to train yourself to practise the airs of genial friendship towards men from whom you are doing your best to hide

yourself, and out of whom you are striving to worm that which they wish to conceal. Said that he was often asked for advice by young men as to objects of study. He bade them study and ponder, first, the history and working of freedom in America; second, the history of absolutism in France from Louis XIV. to the Revolution. It was suggested that if the great thing with the young is to attract them to fine types of character, the Huguenots had some grave, free, heroic figures, and in the eighteenth century Turgot was the one inspiring example: when Mill was in low spirits, he restored himself by Condorcet's life of Turgot. This reminded him that Canning had once praised Turgot in the House of Commons, though most likely nobody but himself knew anything at all about Turgot. Talking of the great centuries, the thirteenth, and the sixteenth, and the seventeenth, Mr. Gladstone let drop what for him seems the remarkable judgment that 'Man as a type has not improved since those great times; he is not so big, so grand, so heroic as he has been.' This, the reader will agree, demands a good deal of consideration.

Then he began to talk about offices, in view of what were now pretty obvious possibilities. After discussing more important people, he asked whether, after a recent conversation, I had thought more of my own office, and I told him that I fancied like Regulus I had better go back to the Irish department. 'Yes,' he answered with a flash of his eye, 'I think so. The truth is that we're both chained to the oar; I am chained to the oar; you are chained.'

II

The electoral period, when it arrived, he passed once more at Dalmeny. In a conversation the morning after I was allowed to join him there, he seemed already to have a grand majority of three figures, to have kissed hands, and to be installed in Downing Street. This confidence was indispensable to him. At the end of his talk he went up to prepare some notes for the speech that he was to make in the afternoon at Glasgow. Just before the carriage came to take him to the train, I heard him calling from the library. In I went, and found him hurriedly thumbing the leaves of a Horace. 'Tell me,' he cried, 'can you put your finger on the passage about Castor and Pollux? I've just thought of something; Castor and Pollux will finish my speech at Glasgow.' 'Isn't it in the Third Book,' said I. 'No, no; I'm pretty sure it is in the First Book'—busily turning over the pages. 'Ah, here it is,' and then he read out the noble lines with animated modulation, shut the book with a bang, and rushed off exultant to the carriage. This became one of the finest of his perorations.[1] His delivery of it that afternoon, they said, was most majestic

[1] See Appendix, Hor. Carm. i. 12, 25.

—the picture of the wreck, and then the calm that gradually brought down the towering billows to the surface of the deep, entrancing the audience like magic.

Then came a depressing week. The polls flowed in, all day long, day after day. The illusory hopes of many months faded into night. The three-figure majority by the end of the week had vanished so completely, that one wondered how it could ever have been thought of. On July 13 his own Midlothian poll was declared, and instead of his old majority of 4000, or the 3000 on which he counted, he was only in by 690. His chagrin was undoubtedly intense, for he had put forth every atom of his strength in the campaign. But with that splendid suppression of vexation which is one of the good lessons that men learn in public life, he put a brave face on it, was perfectly cheery all through the luncheon, and afterwards took me to the music-room, where instead of constructing a triumphant cabinet with a majority of a hundred, he had to try to adjust an Irish policy to a parliament with hardly a majority at all. These topics exhausted, with a curiously quiet gravity of tone he told me that cataract had formed over one eye, that its sight was gone, and that in the other eye he was infested with a white speck. 'One white speck,' he said, almost laughing, 'I can do with, but if the one becomes many, it will be a bad business. They tell me that perhaps the fresh air of Braemar will do me good.' To Braemar the ever loyal Mr. Armitstead piloted them, in company with Lord Acton, of whose society Mr. Gladstone could never have too much.

III

It has sometimes been made a matter of blame by friends no less than foes, that he should have undertaken the task of government, depending on a majority not large enough to coerce the House of Lords. One or two short observations on this would seem to be enough. How could he refuse to try to work his Irish policy through parliament, after the bulk of the Irish members had quitted their own leader two years before in absolute reliance on the sincerity and good faith of Mr. Gladstone and his party? After all the confidence that Ireland had shown in him at the end of 1890, how could he in honour throw up the attempt that had been the only object of his public life since 1886? To do this would have been to justify indeed the embittered warnings of Mr. Parnell in his most reckless hour. How could either refusal of office or the postponement of an Irish bill after taking office, be made intelligible in Ireland itself? Again, the path of honour in Ireland was equally the path of honour and of safety in Great Britain. Were British liberals, who had given him a majority, partly from disgust at Irish coercion, partly from faith that he could produce a working plan of Irish government, and partly from hopes of reforms

of their own—were they to learn that their leaders could do nothing for any of their special objects?

Mr. Gladstone found some consolation in a precedent. In 1835, he argued, 'the Melbourne government came in with a British minority, swelled into a majority hardly touching thirty by the O'Connell contingent of forty. And they stayed in for six years and a half, the longest lived government since Lord Liverpool's.[1] But the Irish were under the command of a master; and Ireland scarcely beginning her political life, had to be content with small mercies. Lastly, that government was rather slack, and on this ground perhaps could not well be taken as a pattern.' In the present case, the attitude of the Parnellite group who continued the schism that began in the events of the winter of 1890, was not likely to prove a grave difficulty in parliament, and in fact it did not. The mischief here was in the effect of Irish feuds upon public opinion in the country. As Mr. Gladstone put it in the course of a letter that he had occasion to write to me (November 26, 1892) :—

> Until the schism arose, we had every prospect of a majority approaching those of 1868 and 1880. With the death of Mr. Parnell it was supposed that it must perforce close. But this expectation has been disappointed. The existence and working of it have to no small extent puzzled and bewildered the English people. They cannot comprehend how a quarrel, to them utterly unintelligible (some even think it discreditable), should be allowed to divide the host in the face of the enemy; and their unity and zeal have been deadened in proportion. Herein we see the main cause why our majority is not more than double what it actually numbers, and the difference between these two scales of majority represents, as I apprehend, the difference between power to carry the bill as the Church and Land bills were carried into law, and the default of such power. The main mischief has already been done; but it receives additional confirmation with the lapse of every week or month.

In forming his fourth administration Mr. Gladstone found one or two obstacles on which he had not reckoned, and perhaps could not have been expected to reckon. By that forbearance of which he was a master, they were in good time surmounted. New men of a promise soon amply fulfilled, were taken in, including, to Mr. Gladstone's own particular satisfaction, the son of the oldest of all the surviving friends of his youth, Sir Thomas Acland.[2]

[1] Lord Palmerston's government of 1859 was shorter by only a few days.

[2] Here is the Fourth Cabinet :—

First lord of the treasury and privy seal	W. E. Gladstone.
Lord chancellor	Lord Herschell.
President of the council and Indian secretary	Earl of Kimberley.
Chancellor of the exchequer	Sir W. V. Harcourt.
Home secretary	H. H. Asquith.
Foreign secretary	Earl of Rosebery.
Colonial secretary	Marquis of Ripon.
Secretary for war	H. Campbell-Bannerman.
First lord of the admiralty	Earl Spencer.
Chief secretary for Ireland	John Morley.

Mr. Gladstone remained as head of the government for a year and a few months (Aug. 1892 to March 3, 1894). In that time several decisions of pith and moment were taken, one measure of high importance became law, operations began against the Welsh establishment, but far the most conspicuous biographic element of this short period was his own incomparable display of power of every kind in carrying the new bill for the better government of Ireland through the House of Commons.

In foreign affairs it was impossible that he should forget the case of Egypt. Lord Salisbury in 1887 had pressed forward an arrangement by which the British occupation was under definite conditions and at a definite date to come to an end. If this convention had been accepted by the Sultan, the British troops would probably have been home by the time of the change of government in this country. French diplomacy, however, at Constantinople, working as it might seem against its own professed aims, hindered the ratification of the convention, and Lord Salisbury's policy was frustrated. Negotiations did not entirely drop, and they had not passed out of existence when Lord Salisbury resigned. In the autumn of 1892 the French ambassador addressed a friendly inquiry to the new government as to the reception likely to be given to overtures for re-opening the negotiations. The answer was that if France had suggestions to offer, they would be received in the same friendly spirit in which they were tendered. When any communications were received, Mr. Gladstone said in the House of Commons, there would be no indisposition on our part to extend to them our friendly consideration. Of all this nothing came. A rather serious ministerial crisis in Egypt in January 1893, followed by a ministerial crisis in Paris in April, arrested whatever projects of negotiation France may have entertained.[1]

IV

In December (1892), at Hawarden, Mr. Gladstone said to me one day after we had been working for five or six hours at the heads of the new Home Rule bill, that his general health was good and sound, but his sight and his hearing were so rapidly declining, that he thought he might almost any day have to retire from office. It was no moment for banal deprecation.

Secretary for Scotland	Sir G. O. Trevelyan.
President of the board of trade	A. J. Mundella.
President of the local government board	H. H. Fowler.
Chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster	James Bryce.
Postmaster-general	Arnold Morley.
First commissioner of works	G. J. Shaw Lefevre.
Vice-president of the council	A. H. D. Acland.

[1] See Mr. Gladstone's speeches and answers to questions in the House of Commons, Jan. 1, Feb. 3, and May 1, 1893. See also the French Yellow Book for 1893, for M. Waddington's despatches of Nov. 1, 1892, May 5, 1893, and Feb. 1, 1893.

He sat silently pondering this vision in his own mind, of coming fate. It seemed like Tennyson's famous simile—

> So dark a forethought rolled about his brain,
> As on a dull day in an ocean cave
> The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall
> In silence.

It would have been preternatural if he had shown the same overwhelming interest that had animated him when the Irish policy was fresh in 1886. Yet the instinct of a strong mind and the lifelong habit of ardent industry carried him through his Sisyphean toil. The routine business of head of a government he attended to, with all his usual assiduity, and in cabinet he was clear, careful, methodical, as always.

The preparation of the bill was carefully and elaborately worked by Mr. Gladstone through an excellent committee of the cabinet.[1] Here he was acute, adroit, patient, full of device, expedient, and the art of construction; now and then vehement and bearing down like a three-decker upon craft of more modest tonnage. But the vehemence was rare, and here as everywhere else he was eager to do justice to all the points and arguments of other people. He sought opportunities of deliberation in order to deliberate, and not under that excellent name to cultivate the art of the harangue, or to overwork secondary points, least of all to treat the many as made for one. That is to say, he went into counsel for the sake of counsel, and not to cajole, or bully, or insist on his own way because it was his own way. In the high article of finance, he would wrestle like a tiger. It was an intricate and difficult business by the necessity of the case, and among the aggravations of it was the discovery at one point that a wrong figure had been furnished to him by some department. He declared this truly heinous crime to be without a precedent in his huge experience.

The crucial difficulty was the Irish representation at Westminster. In the first bill of 1886, the Irish members were to come no more to the imperial parliament, except for one or two special purposes. The two alternatives to the policy of exclusion were either inclusion of the Irish members for all purposes, or else their inclusion for imperial purposes only. In his speech at Swansea in 1887, Mr. Gladstone favoured provisional inclusion, without prejudice to a return to the earlier plan of exclusion if that should be recommended by subsequent experience.[2] In the bill now introduced (Feb. 13, 1893), eighty representatives from Ireland were to have seats at Westminster, but they were not to vote upon motions or bills expressly confined to England or Scotland, and there were

[1] I hope I am not betraying a cabinet secret if I mention that this committee was composed of Mr. Gladstone, Lord Spencer, Lord Herschell, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Bryce, and myself.

[2] See above, p. 470.

other limitations. This plan was soon found to be wholly intolerable to the House of Commons. Exclusion having failed, and inclusion of reduced numbers for limited purposes having failed, the only course left open was what was called *omnes omnia*, or rather the inclusion of eighty Irish members, with power of voting on all purposes.

Each of the three courses was open to at least one single, but very direct, objection. Exclusion, along with the exaction of revenue from Ireland by the parliament at Westminster, was taxation without representation. Inclusion for all purposes was to allow the Irish to meddle in our affairs, while we were no longer to meddle in theirs. Inclusion for limited purposes still left them invested with the power of turning out a British government by a vote against it on an imperial question. Each plan, therefore, ended in a paradox. There was a fourth paradox, namely, that whenever the British supporters of a government did not suffice to build up a decisive majority, then the Irish vote descending into one or other scale of the parliamentary balance might decide who should be our rulers. This paradox—the most glaring of them all—habit and custom have made familiar, and familiarity might almost seem to have actually endeared it to us. In 1893 Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues thought themselves compelled to change clause 9 of the new bill, just as they had thought themselves forced to drop clause 24 of the old bill.

V

It was Mr. Gladstone's performances in the days of committee on the bill, that stirred the wonder and admiration of the House. If he had been fifty they would have been astonishing; at eighty-four they were indeed a marvel. He made speeches of powerful argument, of high constitutional reasoning, of trenchant debating force. No emergency arose for which he was not ready, no demand that his versatility was not adequate to meet. His energy never flagged. When the bill came on, he would put on his glasses, pick up the paper of amendments, and running through them like lightning, would say, 'Of course, that's absurd—that will never do—we can never accept that—is there any harm in this?' Too many concessions made on the spur of the moment to the unionists stirred resentment in the nationalists, and once or twice they exploded. These rapid splendours of his had their perils. I pointed out to him the pretty obvious drawbacks of settling delicate questions as we went along with no chance of sounding the Irishmen, and asked him to spare me quarter of an hour before luncheon, when the draftsman and I, having threshed out the amendments of the day, could put the bare points for his consideration. He was horrified at the very thought. 'Out of the question.

Do you want to kill me? I must have the whole of the morning for general government business. Don't ask me.'[1]

Obstruction was freely practised and without remorse. The chief fighting debater against the government made a long second-reading speech, on the motion that the clause stand part of the bill. A little before eight o'clock when the fighting debater was winding up, Mr. Gladstone was undecided about speaking. 'What do you advise?' he asked of a friend. 'I am afraid it will take too much out of you,' the friend replied; 'but still, speak for twenty minutes and no more.' Up he rose, and for half an hour a delighted House was treated to one of the most remarkable performances that ever were known. 'I have never seen Mr. Gladstone,' says one observer, 'so dramatic, so prolific of all the resources of the actor's art. The courage, the audacity, and the melodrama of it were irresistible' (May 11).

'For ten minutes,' writes another chronicler, 'Mr. Gladstone spoke, holding his audience spell-bound by his force. Then came a sudden change, and it seemed that he was about to collapse from sheer physical exhaustion. His voice failed, huskiness and indistinctness took the place of clearness and lucidity. Then pulling himself together for a great effort, Mr. Gladstone, pointing the deprecatory finger at Mr. Chamberlain, warned the Irishmen to beware of him; to watch the fowler who would inveigle them in his snare. Loud and long rang the liberal cheers. In plain words he told the unionists that Mr. Chamberlain's purpose was none other than obstruction, and he conveyed the intimation with a delicate expressiveness, a superabundant good feeling, a dramatic action and a marvellous music of voice that conspired in their various qualities to produce a *tour de force*. By sheer strength of enthusiasm and an overflowing wealth of eloquence, Mr. Gladstone literally conquered every physical weakness, and secured an effect electric in its influence even on seasoned "old hands." Amidst high excitement and the sound of cheering that promised never to die away the House gradually melted into the lobbies. Mr. Gladstone, exhausted with his effort, chatted to Mr. Morley on the treasury bench. Except for these two the government side was deserted, and the conservatives had already disappeared. The nationalists sat shoulder to shoulder, a solid phalanx. They eyed the prime minister with eager intent, and as soon as the venerable statesman rose to walk out of the House, they sprang to their feet and rent the air with wild hurrahs.'

No wonder if the talk downstairs at dinner among his colleagues that night, all turned upon their chief, his art and power, his union of the highest qualities of brain and heart with extraordinary practical penetration, and close watchfulness of incident and trait and personality, disclosed in many a racy aside and pungent sally. The orator was fatigued, but full of keen enjoyment. This was one of the three or four

[1] One poor biographic item perhaps the tolerant reader will not grudge me leave to copy from Mr. Gladstone's diary:—'*October* 6, 1892. Saw J. Morley and made him envoy to ——. He is on the whole . . . about the best stay I have.'

occasions when he was induced not to return to the House after dinner. It had always been his habit in taking charge of bills to work the ship himself. No wonder that he held to his habit in this case.

On another occasion ministers had taken ground that, as the debate went on, everybody saw they could not hold. An official spokesman for the bill had expressed an opinion, or intention, that, as very speedily appeared, Irish opposition would not allow to be maintained. There was no great substance in the point, but even a small dose of humiliation will make a parliamentary dish as bitter to one side as it is savoury to the other. The opposition grew more and more radiant, as it grew more certain that the official spokesman must be thrown over. The discomfiture of the ministerialists at the prospect of the public mortification of their leaders was extreme in the same degree. 'I suppose we must give it up,' said Mr. Gladstone. This was clear; and when he rose, he was greeted with mocking cheers from the enemy, though the enemy's chief men who had long experience of his Protean resources were less confident. Beginning in a tone of easy gravity and candour, he went on to points of pleasant banter, got his audience interested and amused and a little bewildered; carried men with him in graceful arguments on the merits; and finally, with bye-play of consummate sport, showed in triumph that the concession that we consented to make was so right and natural, that it must have been inevitable from the very first. Never were tables more effectively turned; the opposition watched first with amazement, then with excitement and delight as children watch a wizard; and he sat down victorious. Not another word was said or could be said. 'Never in all my parliamentary years,' said a powerful veteran on the front bench opposite, as he passed behind the Speaker's chair, 'never have I seen so wonderful a thing done as that.'

The state of the county of Clare was a godsend to the obstructive. Clare was not at that moment quite as innocent as the garden of Eden before the fall, but the condition was not serious; it had been twenty times worse before without occupying the House of Commons five minutes. Now an evening a week was not thought too much for a hollow debate on disorder in Clare. It was described as a definite matter of urgent importance, though it had slept for years, and though three times in succession the judge of assize (travelling entirely out of his proper business) had denounced the state of things. It was made to support five votes of censure in eight weeks.

On one of these votes of censure on Irish administration, moved by Mr. Balfour (March 27), Mr. Gladstone listened to the debate. At 8 we begged him not to stay and not to take the trouble to speak, so trumpery was the whole affair. He said he must, if only for five minutes, to show that he identified himself

with his Irish minister. He left to dine, and then before ten was on his feet, making what Lord Randolph Churchill rightly called 'a most impressive and entrancing speech.' He talked of Pat this and Michael that, and Father the other, as if he had pondered their cases for a month, clenching every point with extraordinary strength as well as consummate ease and grace, and winding up with some phrases of wonderful simplicity and concentration.

A distinguished member made a motion for the exclusion of Irish cabinet ministers from their chamber. Mr. Gladstone was reminded on the bench just before he rose, that the same proposal had been inserted in the Act of Settlement, and repealed in 1705. He wove this into his speech with a skill, and amplified confidence, that must have made everybody suppose that it was a historic fact present every day to his mind. The attention of a law-officer sitting by was called to this rapid amplification. 'I never saw anything like it in all my whole life,' said the law-officer; and he was a man who had been accustomed to deal with some of the strongest and quickest minds of the day as judges and advocates.

One day when a tremendous afternoon of obstruction had almost worn him down, the adjournment came at seven o'clock. He was haggard and depressed. On returning at ten we found him making a most lively and amusing speech upon procedure. He sat down as blithe as dawn. 'To make a speech of that sort,' he said in deprecation of compliment, 'a man does best to dine out; 'tis no use to lie on a sofa and think about it.'

Undoubtedly Mr. Gladstone's method in this long committee carried with it some disadvantages. His discursive treatment exposed an enormous surface. His abundance of illustration multiplied points for debate. His fertility in improvised arguments encouraged improvisation in disputants without the gift. Mr. Gladstone always supposed that a great theme needs to be copiously handled, which is perhaps doubtful, and indeed is often an exact inversion of the true state of things. However that may be, copiousness is a game at which two can play, as a patriotic opposition now and at other times has effectually disclosed. Some thought in these days that a man like Lord Althorp, for instance, would have given the obstructives much more trouble in their pursuits than did Mr. Gladstone.

That Mr. Gladstone's supporters should become restive at the slow motion of business was natural enough. They came to ministers, calling out for a drastic closure, as simple tribes might clamour to a rain-maker. It was the end of June, and with a reasonable opposition conducted in decent good faith, it was computed that the bill might be through committee in nineteen days. But the hypothesis of reason and good faith was not thought to be substantial, and the cabinet resolved on

resort to closure on a scale like that on which it had been used by the late government in the case of the Crimes Act of 1887, and of the Special Commission. It has been said since on excellent authority, that without speaking of their good faith, Mr. Gladstone's principal opponents were now running absolutely short of new ammunition, and having used the same arguments and made the same speeches for so many weeks, they were so worn out that the guillotine was superfluous. Of these straits, however, there was little evidence. Mr. Gladstone entered into the operation with a good deal of chagrin. He saw that the House of Commons in which he did his work and rose to glory was swiftly fading out of sight, and a new institution of different habits of responsibility and practice taking its place.

The stage of committee lasted for sixty-three sittings. The whole proceedings occupied eighty-two. It is not necessary to hold that the time was too long for the size of the task, if it had been well spent. The spirit of the debate was aptly illustrated by the plea of a brilliant tory, that he voted for a certain motion against a principle that he approved, because he thought the carrying of the motion 'would make the bill more detestable.' Opposition rested on a view of Irish character and Irish feeling about England, that can hardly have been very deeply thought out, because ten years later the most bitter opponents of the Irish claim launched a policy, that was to make Irish peasants direct debtors to the hated England to the tune of one hundred million pounds, and was to dislodge by imperial cash those who were persistently called the only friends of the imperial connection.

The bill passed its second reading by 347 against 304, or a majority of 43. In some critical divisions, the majority ran down to 27. The third reading was carried by 301 against 267, or a majority of 34. It was estimated that excluding the Irish, there was a majority against the bill of 23. If we counted England and Wales alone, the adverse majority was 48. When it reached them, the Lords incontinently threw it out. The roll of the Lords held 560 names, beyond the peers of the royal house. Of this body of 560, no fewer than 419 voted against the bill, and only 41 voted for it.

VI

The session was protracted until it became the longest in the history of parliament. The House was sitting when Mr. Gladstone's eighty-fourth birthday arrived. 'Before putting a question,' said Mr. Balfour in a tone that, after the heat and exasperations of so many months, was refreshing to hear, 'perhaps the right honourable gentlemen will allow me, on my own part and on that of my friends, to offer him our most sincere congratulations.' 'Allow me to thank him,' said Mr.

Gladstone, 'for his great courtesy and kindness.' The government pressed forward and carried through the House of Commons a measure dealing with the liability of employers for accidents, and a more important measure setting up elective bodies for certain purposes in parishes. Into the first the Lords introduced such changes as were taken to nullify all the advantages of the bill, and the cabinet approved of its abandonment. Into the second they forced back certain provisions that the Commons had with full deliberation decisively rejected.

Mr. Gladstone was at Biarritz, he records, when this happened in the January of 1894. He had gone there to recruit after the incomparable exertions of the session, and also to consider at a cool distance and in changed scenes other topics that had for some weeks caused him some agitation. He now thought that there was a decisive case against the House of Lords. Apart from the Irish bill to which the Commons had given eighty-two days, the Lords had maimed the bill for parish councils, to which had gone the labour of forty-one days. Other bills they had mutilated or defeated. Upon the whole, he argued, it was not too much to say that for practical purposes the Lords had destroyed the work of the House of Commons, unexampled as that work was in the time and pains bestowed upon it. 'I suggested dissolution to my colleagues in London, where half, or more than half, the cabinet were found at the moment. I received by telegraph a hopelessly adverse reply.' Reluctantly he let the idea drop, always maintaining, however, that a signal opportunity had been lost. Even in my last conversation with him in 1897, he held to his text that we ought to have dissolved at this moment. The case, he said, was clear, thorough, and complete. As has been already mentioned, there were four occasions on which he believed that he had divined the right moment for a searching appeal to public opinion on a great question.[1] The renewal of the income tax in 1853 was the first; the proposal of religious equality for Ireland in 1868 was the second; home rule was the third, and here he was justified by the astonishing and real progress that he had made up to the catastrophe at the end of 1890. The fourth case was this, of a dissolution upon the question of the relations of the two Houses.

[1] See above, i. p. 654.

CHAPTER VIII

RETIREMENT FROM PUBLIC LIFE

(*1894*)

*

O, 'tis a burden, Cromwell, 'tis a burden
Too heavy for a man that hopes for heaven.
HENRY VIII. iii. 2.

'POLITICS,' wrote Mr. Gladstone in one of his private memoranda in March 1894, 'are like a labyrinth, from the inner intricacies of which it is even more difficult to find the way of escape, than it was to find the way into them. My age did something but not enough. The deterioration of my hearing helped, but insufficiently. It is the state of my sight which has supplied me with effectual aid in exchanging my imperious public obligations for what seems to be a free place on "the breezy common of humanity." And it has only been within the last eight months or thereabouts, that the decay of working sight has advanced at such a pace as to present the likelihood of its becoming stringently operative at an early date. It would have been very difficult to fix that date at this or that precise point, without the appearance of making an arbitrary choice; but then the closing of the parliamentary session (1893-4) offered a natural break between the cessation and renewal of engagements, which was admirably suited to the design. And yet I think it, if not certain, yet very highly probable at the least, that any disposition of mine to profit by this break would —but for the naval scheme of my colleagues in the naval estimates—have been frustrated by their desire to avoid the inconveniences of a change, and by the pressure which they would have brought to bear upon me in consequence. The effect of that scheme was not to bring about the construction of an artificial cause, or pretext rather, of resignation, but to compel me to act upon one that was rational, sufficient, and ready to hand.'

This is the short, plain, and intelligible truth as to what now happened. There can be no reason to-day for not stating what

was for a long time matter of common surmise, if not of common knowledge, that Mr. Gladstone did not regard the naval estimates, opened but not settled in December 1893, as justified by the circumstances of the time. He made a speech that month in parliament in reply to a motion from the front bench opposite, and there he took a position undoubtedly antagonistic to the new scheme that found favour with his cabinet, though not with all its members. The present writer is of course not free to go into details, beyond those that anybody else not a member of the cabinet would discover from Mr. Gladstone's papers. Nor does the public lose anything of real interest by this necessary reserve. Mr. Gladstone said he wished to make me 'his depositary' as things gradually moved on, and he wrote me a series of short letters from day to day. If they could be read aloud in Westminster Hall, no harm would be done either to surviving colleagues or to others; they would furnish no new reason for thinking either better or worse of anybody; and no one with a decent sense of the value of time would concern himself in all the minor detail of an ineffectual controversy. The central facts were simple. Two things weighed with him, first his infirmities, and second his disapproval of the policy. How, he asked himself, could he turn his back on his former self by becoming a party to swollen expenditure? True he had changed from conservative to liberal in general politics, but when he was conservative, that party was the economic party, 'Peel its leader being a Cobdenite.' To assent to this new outlay in time of peace was to revolutionize policy. Then he would go on—'Owing to the part which I was drawn to take, first in Italy, then as to Greece, then on the eastern question, I have come to be considered not only an English but a European statesman. My name stands in Europe as a symbol of the policy of peace, moderation, and non-aggression. What would be said of my active participation in a policy that will be taken as plunging England into the whirlpool of militarism? Third, I have been in active public life for a period nearly as long as the time between the beginning of Mr. Pitt's first ministry, and the close of Sir Robert Peel's; between 1783 and 1846—sixty-two years and a half. During that time I have uniformly opposed militarism.' Thus he would put his case.

After the naval estimates were brought forward, attempts were naturally made at accommodation, for whether he availed himself of the end of the session as a proper occasion of retirement or not, he was bound to try to get the estimates down if he could. He laboured hard at the task of conversion, and though some of his colleagues needed no conversion, with the majority he did not prevail. He admitted that he had made limited concessions to scares in 1860 and in 1884, and that he had besides been repeatedly responsible for extraordinary financial provisions having reference to some crisis of the day:—

I did this, (1) By a preliminary budget in 1854; (2) By the final budget of July 1859; by the vote of credit in July 1870; and again by the vote of credit in 1884. Every one of these was special, and was shown in each case respectively to be special by the sequel: no one of them had reference to the notion of establishing dominant military or even naval power in Europe. Their amounts were various, but were adapted to the view taken, at least by me, of the exigency actually present.[1]

II

While the House after so many months of toil was still labouring manfully upon English bills, two of them of no secondary importance, it was decided by his family and their advisers that Mr. Gladstone should again try the effects of Biarritz, and thither they went on January 13. Distance, however, could not efface from his mind all thought of the decision that the end of the session would exact from him. Rumours began to fly about in London that the prime minister upon his return intended to resign, and they were naturally clad with intrinsic probability. From Biarritz a communication was made to the press with his authority. It was to this effect, that the statement that Mr. Gladstone had definitely decided, or had decided at all, on resigning office was untrue. It was true that for many months past his age and the condition of his sight and hearing had in his judgment made relief from public cares desirable, and that accordingly his tenure of office had been at any moment liable to interruption from these causes, in their nature permanent.

Nature meanwhile could not set back the shadow on the dial. On his coming back from Biarritz (February 10) neither eyes nor ears were better. How should they be at eighty-five? The session was ending, the prorogation speech was to be composed, and the time had come for that 'natural break' between the cessation and renewal of his official obligations, of which we have already heard him speak. His colleagues carried almost to importunity their appeals to him to stay; to postpone what one of them called, and many of them truly felt to be, this 'moment of anguish.' The division of opinion on estimates remained, but even if that could have been bridged, his sight and hearing could not be made whole. The rational and sufficient cause of resignation, as he only too justly described it, was strong as ever. Whether if the cabinet had come to his view on estimates, he would in spite of his great age and infirmities have come to their view of the importance of his remaining, we cannot tell. According to his wont, he avoided decision until the time had come when decision was necessary, and then he made up his mind, 'without the appearance of an arbitrary choice,' that the time had come for accepting the natural break, and quitting office.

[1] See Appendix for further elucidation.

On Feb. 27, arriving in the evening at Euston from Ireland, I was met by a messenger with a note from Mr. Gladstone begging me to call on my way home. I found him busy as usual at his table in Downing Street. 'I suppose 'tis the long habit of a life,' he said cheerily, 'but even in the midst of these passages, if ever I have half or quarter of an hour to spare, I find myself turning to my Horace translation.' He said the prorogation speech would be settled on Thursday; the Queen would consider it on Friday; the council would be held on Saturday, and on that evening or afternoon he should send in his letter of resignation.

The next day he had an audience at Buckingham Palace, and indirectly conveyed to the Queen what she might soon expect to learn from him. His rigorous sense of loyalty to colleagues made it improper and impossible to bring either before the Queen or the public his difference of judgment on matters for which his colleagues, not he, would be responsible, and on which they, not he, would have to take action. He derived certain impressions at his audience, he told me, one of them being that the Sovereign would not seek his advice as to a successor.

He wrote to inform the Prince of Wales of the approaching event:—

'In thus making it known to your royal Highness,' he concluded, 'I desire to convey, on my own and my wife's part our fervent thanks for the unbounded kindness which we have at all times received from your royal Highness and not less from the beloved Princess of Wales. The devotion of an old man is little worth; but if at any time there be the smallest service which by information or suggestion your royal Highness may believe me capable of rendering, I shall remain as much at your command as if I had continued to be an active and responsible servant of the Queen. I remain with heartfelt loyalty and gratitude, etc.'

The Prince expressed his sincere regret, said how deeply the Princess and he were touched by the kind words about them, and how greatly for a long number of years they had valued his friendship and that of Mrs. Gladstone. Mr. Balfour, to whom he also confidentially told the news, communicated among other graceful words, 'the special debt of gratitude that was due to him for the immense public service he had performed in fostering and keeping alive the great traditions of the House of Commons.' The day after that (March 1) was his last cabinet council, and a painful day it was. The business of the speech and other matters were discussed as usual, then came the end. In his report to the Queen—his last—he said:—

Looking forward to the likelihood that this might be the last occasion on which Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues might meet in the cabinet, Lord Kimberley and Sir William Harcourt on their own part and on that of the ministers generally, used words undeservedly kind of acknowledgment and farewell. Lord Kimberley will pray your Majesty

to appoint a council for Saturday, at as early an hour as may be convenient.

Mr. Gladstone sat composed and still as marble, and the emotion of the cabinet did not gain him for an instant. He followed the 'words of acknowledgment and farewell' in a little speech of four or five minutes, his voice unbroken and serene, the tone low, grave, and steady. He was glad to know that he had justification in the condition of his senses. He was glad to think that notwithstanding difference upon a public question, private friendships would remain unaltered and unimpaired. Then hardly above a breath, but every accent heard, he said 'God bless you all.' He rose slowly and went out of one door, while his colleagues with minds oppressed filed out by the other. In his diary he enters—'A really moving scene.'

A little later in the afternoon he made his last speech in the House of Commons. It was a vigorous assault upon the House of Lords. His mind had changed since the day in September 1884 when he had declared to an emissary from the court that he hated organic change in the House of Lords, and would do much to avert that mischief.[1] Circumstances had now altered the case; we had come to a more acute stage. Were they to accept the changes made by the Lords in the bill for parish councils, or were they to drop it? The question, he said, is whether the work of the House of Lords is not merely to modify, but to annihilate the whole work of the House of Commons, work which has been performed at an amount of sacrifice—of time, of labour, of convenience, and perhaps of health—but at any rate an amount of sacrifice totally unknown to the House of Lords. The government had resolved that great as were the objections to acceptance of the changes made by the Lords, the arguments against rejection were still weightier. Then he struck a note of passion, and spoke with rising fire:—

> We are compelled to accompany that acceptance with the sorrowful declaration that the differences, not of a temporary or casual nature merely, but differences of conviction, differences of prepossession, differences of mental habit, and differences of fundamental tendency, between the House of Lords and the House of Commons, appear to have reached a development in the present year such as to create a state of things of which we are compelled to say that, in our judgment, it cannot continue. Sir, I do not wish to use hard words, which are easily employed and as easily retorted—it is a game that two can play at—but without using hard words, without presuming to judge of motives, without desiring or venturing to allege imputations, I have felt it a duty to state what appeared to me to be indisputable facts. The issue which is raised between a deliberative assembly, elected by the votes of more than 6,000,000 people, and a deliberative assembly

[1] Above, p. 277.

occupied by many men of virtue, by many men of talent, of course with considerable diversities and varieties, is a controversy which, when once raised, must go forward to an issue.

Men did not know that they were listening to his last speech, but his words fell in with the eager humour of his followers around him, and he sat down amid vehement plaudits. Then when the business was at an end, he rose, and for the last time walked away from the House of Commons. He had first addressed it sixty-one years before.

III

The following day (March 2) he busied himself in packing his papers, and working at intervals on his translation of Horace. He told me that he had now reason to suppose that the Queen might ask him for advice as to his successor. After some talk, he said that if asked he should advise her to send for Lord Spencer. As it happened, his advice was not sought. That evening he went to Windsor to dine and sleep. The next day was to be the council. Here is his memorandum of the last audience on Saturday, March 3 :—[1]

As I crossed the quadrangle at 10.20 on my way to St. George's Chapel, I met Sir H. Ponsonby, who said he was anxious to speak to me about the future. He was much impressed with the movement among a body of members of parliament against having any peer for prime minister. I signified briefly that I did not think there should be too ready a submission to such a movement. There was not time to say a great deal, and I had something serious to say, so we adjourned the conversation till half past eleven, when I should return from St. George's.

He came at that time and opened on the same lines, desiring to obtain from me whatever I thought proper to say as to persons in the arrangements for the future. I replied to him that this was in my view a most serious matter. All my thoughts on it were absolutely at the command of the Queen. And I should be equally at his command, if he inquired of me from her and in her name ; but that otherwise my lips must be sealed. I knew from him that he was in search of information to report to the Queen, but this was a totally different matter.

I entered, however, freely on the general question of the movement among a section of the House of Commons. I thought it impossible to say at the moment, but I should not take for granted that it would be formidable or regard it as *in limine* disposing of the question. Up to a certain point, I thought it a duty to strengthen the hands of our small minority and little knot of ministers in the Lords, by providing these ministers with such weight as attaches to high office. All this, or rather all that touched the main point, namely the point of a peer prime minister, he without doubt reported.

The council train came down and I joined the ministers in the drawing-room. I received various messages as to the time when I was to see the Queen, and when it would be most convenient to me. I interpret this variety as showing that she was nervous. It ended in

[1] Written down, March 5.

fixing the time after the council and before luncheon, I carried with me a box containing my resignation, and, the council being over, handed it to her immediately, and told her that it contained my tender of resignation. She asked whether she ought then to read it. I said there was nothing in the letter to require it. It repeated my former letter of notice, with the requisite additions.

I must notice what, though slight, supplied the only incident of any interest in this perhaps rather memorable audience, which closed a service that would reach to fifty-three years on September 3, when I was sworn privy councillor before the Queen at Claremont. When I came into the room and came near to take the seat she has now for some time courteously commanded, I did think she was going to 'break down.' If I was not mistaken, at any rate she rallied herself, as I thought, by a prompt effort, and remained collected and at her ease. Then came the conversation, which may be called neither here nor there. Its only material feature was negative. There was not one syllable on the past, except a repetition, an emphatic repetition, of the thanks she had long ago amply rendered for what I had done, a service of no great merit, in the matter of the Duke of Coburg, and which I assured her would not now escape my notice if occasion should arise. There was the question of eyes and ears, of German *versus* English oculists, she believing in the German as decidedly superior. Some reference to my wife, with whom she had had an interview and had ended it affectionately,—and various nothings. No touch on the subject of the last Ponsonby conversation. Was I wrong in not tendering orally my best wishes? I was afraid that anything said by me should have the appearance of *touting*. A departing servant has some title to offer his hopes and prayers for the future; but a servant is one who has done, or tried to do, service in the past. There is in all this a great sincerity. There also seems to be some little mystery as to my own case with her. I saw no sign of embarrassment or preoccupation. The Empress Frederick was outside in the corridor. She bade me a most kind and warm farewell, which I had done nothing to deserve.

The letter tendered to the Queen in the box was this:—

Mr. Gladstone presents his most humble duty to your Majesty. The close of the session and the approach of a new one have offered Mr. Gladstone a suitable opportunity for considering the condition of his sight and hearing, both of them impaired, in relation to his official obligations. As they now place serious and also growing obstacles in the way of the efficient discharge of those obligations, the result has been that he has found it his duty humbly to tender to your Majesty his resignation of the high offices which your Majesty has been pleased to intrust to him. His desire to make this surrender is accompanied with a grateful sense of the condescending kindnesses, which your Majesty has graciously shown him on so many occasions during the various periods for which he has had the honour to serve your Majesty. Mr. Gladstone will not needlessly burden your Majesty with a recital of particulars. He may, however, say that although at eighty-four years of age he is sensible of a diminished capacity for prolonged labour, this is not of itself such as would justify his praying to be relieved from the restraints and exigencies of official life. But his deafness has become in parliament, and even in the cabinet, a serious inconvenience, of which

he must reckon on more progressive increase. More grave than this, and more rapid in its growth, is the obstruction of vision which arises from cataract in both his eyes. It has cut him off in substance from the newspapers, and from all except the best types in the best lights, while even as to these he cannot master them with that ordinary facility and despatch which he deems absolutely required for the due despatch of his public duties. In other respects than reading the operation of the complaint is not as yet so serious, but this one he deems to be vital. Accordingly he brings together these two facts, the condition of his sight and hearing, and the break in the course of public affairs brought about in the ordinary way by the close of the session. He has therefore felt that this is the fitting opportunity for the resignation which by this letter he humbly prays your Majesty to accept.

In the course of the day the Queen wrote what I take to be her last letter to him :—

Windsor Castle, March 3, 1894.—Though the Queen has already accepted Mr. Gladstone's resignation, and has taken leave of him, she does not like to leave his letter tendering his resignation unanswered. She therefore writes these few lines to say that she thinks that after so many years of arduous labour and responsibility he is right in wishing to be relieved at his age of these arduous duties. And she trusts he will be able to enjoy peace and quiet with his excellent and devoted wife in health and happiness, and that his eyesight may improve.

The Queen would gladly have conferred a peerage on Mr. Gladstone, but she knows he would not accept it.

His last act in relation to this closing scene of the great official drama was a letter to General Ponsonby (March 5) :—

The first entrance of a man to Windsor Castle in a responsible character, is a great event in his life ; and his last departure from it is not less moving. But in and during the process which led up to this transaction on Saturday, my action has been in the strictest sense sole, and it has required me in circumstances partly known to harden my heart into a flint. However, it is not even now so hard, but that I can feel what you have most kindly written ; nor do I fail to observe with pleasure that you do not speak absolutely in the singular. If there were feelings that made the occasion sad, such feelings do not die with the occasion. But this letter must not be wholly one of egotism. I have known and have liked and admired all the men who have served the Queen in your delicate and responsible office ; and have liked most, probably because I knew him most, the last of them, that most true-hearted man, General Grey. But forgive me for saying you are 'to the manner born' ; and such a combination of tact and temper with loyalty, intelligence, and truth I cannot expect to see again. Pray remember these are words which can only pass from an old man to one much younger, though trained in a long experience.

It is hardly in human nature, in spite of Charles V., Sulla, and some other historic persons, to lay down power beyond recall, without a secret pang. In Prior's lines that came to the mind of brave Sir Walter Scott, as he saw the curtain falling on his days.—

> The man in graver tragic known,
> (Though his best part long since was done,)
> Still on the stage desires to tarry . . .
> Unwilling to retire, though weary.

Whether the departing minister had a lingering thought that in the dispensations of the world, purposes and services would still arise to which even yet he might one day be summoned, we do not know. Those who were nearest to him believe not, and assuredly he made no outer sign.

CHAPTER IX

THE CLOSE

(*1894–1898*)

Natural death is as it were a haven and a rest to us after long navigation. And the noble Soul is like a good mariner; for he, when he draws near the port, lowers his sails and enters it softly with gentle steerage. . . . And herein we have from our own nature a great lesson of suavity; for in such a death as this there is no grief nor any bitterness: but as a ripe apple is lightly and without violence loosened from its branch, so our soul without grieving departs from the body in which it hath been.—DANTE, *Convito*.[1]

AFTER the first wrench was over, and an end had come to the demands, pursuits, duties, glories, of powerful and active station held for a long lifetime, Mr. Gladstone soon settled to the new conditions of his existence, knowing that for him all that could be left was, in the figure of his great Italian poet, 'to lower sails and gather in his ropes.'[2] He was not much in London, and when he came he stayed in the pleasant retreat to which his affectionate and ever-attached friends, Lord and Lady Aberdeen, so often invited him at Dollis Hill. Much against his will, he did not resign his seat in the House, and he held it until the dissolution of 1895.[3] In June (1895) he took a final cruise in one of Sir Donald Currie's ships, visiting Hamburg, the new North Sea canal, and Copenhagen once more. His injured sight was a far deadlier breach in the habit of his days than withdrawal from office or from parliament. His own tranquil words written in the year in which he laid down his part in the shows of the world's huge stage, tell the story:—

July 25, 1894.—For the first time in my life there has been given to me by the providence of God a period of comparative leisure, reckoning at the present date to four and a half months. Such a period drives the mind in upon itself, and invites, almost constrains, to recollection, and the rendering at least internally an account of life; further it lays the basis of a habit of meditation, to the formation of which the course of my existence, packed and crammed with occupation outwards, never stagnant, oft-times overdriven, has been extremely hostile. As there is

[1] Dr. Carlyle's translation.

[2] *Inferno*, xxvii. 81.

[3] On July 1, 1895, he announced his formal withdrawal in a letter to Sir John Cowan, so long the loyal chairman of his electoral committee.

no life which in its detail does not seem to afford intervals of brief leisure, or what is termed 'waiting' for others engaged with us in some common action, these are commonly spent in murmurs and in petulant desire for their termination. But in reality they supply excellent opportunities for brief or ejaculatory prayer.

As this new period of my life has brought with it my retirement from active business in the world, it affords a good opportunity for breaking off the commonly dry daily journal, or ledger as it might almost be called, in which for seventy years I have recorded the chief details of my outward life. If life be continued I propose to note in it henceforward only principal events or occupations. This first breach since the latter part of May in this year has been involuntary. When the operation on my eye for cataract came, it was necessary for a time to suspend all use of vision. Before that, from the beginning of March, it was only my out-of-door activity or intercourse that had been paralysed. . . . For my own part, *suave mari magno* steals upon me; or at any rate, an inexpressible sense of relief from an exhausting life of incessant contention. A great revolution has been operated in my correspondence, which had for many years been a serious burden, and at times one almost intolerable. During the last months of partial incapacity I have not written with my own hand probably so much as one letter per day. Few people have had a smaller number of *otiosæ* conversations probably than I in the last fifty years; but I have of late seen more friends and more freely, though without practical objects in view. Many kind friends have read books to me; I must place Lady Sarah Spencer at the head of the proficients in that difficult art; in distinctness of articulation, with low clear voice, she is supreme. Dearest Catherine has been my chaplain from morning to morning. My church-going has been almost confined to mid-day communions, which have not required my abandonment of the reclining posture for long periods of time. Authorship has not been quite in abeyance; I have been able to write what I was not allowed to read, and have composed two theological articles for the *Nineteenth Century* of August and September respectively.[1]

Independently of the days of blindness after the operation, the visits of doctors have become a noticeable item of demand upon time. Of physic I incline to believe I have had as much in 1894 as in my whole previous life. I have learned for the first time the extraordinary comfort of the aid which the attendance of a nurse can give. My health will now be matter of little interest except to myself. But I have not yet abandoned the hope that I may be permitted to grapple with that considerable armful of work, which had been long marked out for my old age; the question of my recovering sight being for the present in abeyance.

Sept. 13.—I am not yet thoroughly accustomed to my new stage of existence, in part because the remains of my influenza have not yet allowed me wholly to resume the habits of health. But I am thoroughly content with my retirement; and I cast no longing, lingering look behind. I pass onward from it *oculo irretorto*. There is plenty of work before me, peaceful work and work directed to the supreme, *i.e.* the spiritual cultivation of mankind, if it pleases God to give me time and vision to perform it.

[1] 'The Place of Heresy and Schism in the Modern Christian Church' and 'The True and False Conception of the Atonement.'

Oct. 1.—As far as I can at present judge, all the signs of the eye being favourable, the new form of vision will enable me to get through in a given time about half the amount of work which would have been practicable under the old. I speak of reading and writing work, which have been principal with me when I had the option. In conversation there is no difference, although there are various drawbacks in what we call society. On the 20th of last month, when I had gone through my crises of trials, Mr. Nettleship, [the oculist], at once declared that any further operation would be superfluous.

I am unable to continue attendance at the daily morning service, not on account of the eyesight but because I may not rise before ten at the earliest. And so a Hawarden practice of over fifty years is interrupted; not without some degree of hope that it may be resumed. Two evening services, one at 5 P.M. and the other at 7, afford me a limited consolation. I drive almost every day, and thus grow to my dissatisfaction more burdensome. My walking powers are limited; once I have exceeded two miles by a little. A large part of the day remains available at my table; daylight is especially precious; my correspondence is still a weary weight, though I have admirable help from children. Upon the whole the change is considerable. In early and mature life a man walks to his daily work with a sense of the duty and capacity of self-provision, a certain αὐτάρκεια [independence] (which the Greeks carried into the moral world). Now that sense is reversed; it seems as if I must, God knows how reluctantly, lay burdens upon others; and as if capacity were, so to speak, dealt out to me mercifully—but by armfuls.

Old age until the very end brought no grave changes in physical conditions. He missed sorely his devoted friend, Sir Andrew Clark, to whose worth as man and skill as healer he had borne public testimony in May 1894. But for physician's service there was no special need. His ordinary life, though of diminished power, suffered little interruption. 'The attitude,' he wrote, 'in which I endeavoured to fix myself was that of a soldier on parade, in a line of men drawn up ready to march and waiting for the word of command. I sought to be in preparation for prompt obedience, feeling no desire to go, but on the other hand without reluctance, because firmly convinced that whatever He ordains for us is best, best both for us and for all.'

He worked with all his old zest at his edition of Bishop Butler, and his volume of studies subsidiary to Butler. He wrote to the Duke of Argyll (Dec. 5, 1895):—

> I find my Butler a weighty undertaking, but I hope it will be useful at least for the important improvements of form which I am making.
>
> It is very difficult to keep one's temper in dealing with M. Arnold when he touches on religious matters. His patronage of a Christianity fashioned by himself is to me more offensive and trying than rank unbelief. But I try, or seem to myself to try, to shrink from controversy of which I have had so much. Organic evolution sounds to me a Butlerish idea, but I doubt if he ever employed either term, certainly he has not the phrase, and I cannot as yet identify the passage to which you may refer.

Dec. 9.—Many thanks for your letter. The idea of evolution is without doubt deeply ingrained in Butler. The case of the animal creation had a charm for him, and in his first chapter he opens, without committing himself, the idea of their possible elevation to a much higher state. I have always been struck by the glee with which negative writers strive to get rid of 'special creation,' as if by that method they got the idea of God out of their way, whereas I know not what right they have to say that the small increments effected by the divine workman are not as truly special as the large. It is remarkable that Butler has taken such hold both on nonconformists in England and outside of England, especially on those bodies in America which are descended from English nonconformists.

He made progress with his writings on the Olympian Religion, without regard to Acton's warnings and exhortations to read a score of volumes by learned explorers with uncouth names. He collected a new series of his *Gleanings*. By 1896 he had got his cherished project of hostel and library at St. Deiniol's in Hawarden village, near to its launch. He was drawn into a discussion on the validity of anglican orders, and even wrote a letter to Cardinal Rampolla, in his effort to realise the dream of Christian unity. The Vatican replied in such language as might have been expected by anybody with less than Mr. Gladstone's inextinguishable faith in the virtues of argumentative persuasion. Soon he saw the effects of Christian disunion upon a bloodier stage. In the autumn of this year he was roused to one more vehement protest like that twenty years before against the abominations of Turkish rule, this time in Armenia. He had been induced to address a meeting in Chester in August 1895, and now a year later he travelled to Liverpool (Sept. 24) to a non-party gathering at Hengler's Circus. He always described this as the place most agreeable to the speaker of all those with which he was acquainted. 'Had I the years of 1876 upon me,' he said to one of his sons, 'gladly would I start another campaign, even if as long as that.'

To discuss, almost even to describe, the course of his policy and proceedings in the matter of Armenia, would bring us into a mixed controversy affecting statesmen now living, who played an unexpected part, and that controversy may well stand over for another, and let us hope a very distant, day. Whether we had a right to interfere single-handed; whether we were bound as a duty to interfere under the Cyprus Convention; whether our intervention would provoke hostilities on the part of other Powers and even kindle a general conflagration in Europe; whether our severance of diplomatic relations with the Sultan or our withdrawal from the concert of Europe would do any good; what possible form armed intervention could take—all these are questions on which both liberals and tories vehemently differed from one another then, and will vehemently differ again. Mr. Gladstone was bold and firm in his replies. As to the idea, he said, that all independent action on the part

of this great country was to be made chargeable for producing war in Europe, 'that is in my opinion a mistake almost more deplorable than almost any committed in the history of diplomacy.' We had a right under the convention. We had a duty under the responsibilities incurred at Paris in 1856, at Berlin in 1878. The upshot of his arguments at Liverpool was that we should break off relations with the Sultan; that we should undertake not to turn hostilities to our private advantage; that we should limit our proceedings to the suppression of mischief in its aggravated form; and if Europe threatened us with war it might be necessary to recede, as France had receded under parallel circumstances from her individual policy on the eastern question in 1840,—receded without loss either of honour or power, believing that she had been right and wise and others wrong and unwise.

If Mr. Gladstone had still had, as he puts it, 'the years of 1876,' he might have made as deep a mark. As it was, his speech at Liverpool was his last great deliverance to a public audience. As the year ended this was his birthday entry:—

Dec. 29, 1896.—My long and tangled life this day concludes its 87th year. My father died four days short of that term. I know of no other life so long in the Gladstone family, and my profession has been that of politician, or, more strictly, minister of state, an extremely short-lived race when their scene of action has been in the House of Commons, Lord Palmerston being the only complete exception. In the last twelve months eyes and ears may have declined, but not materially. The occasional contraction of the chest is the only inconvenience that can be called new. I am not without hope that Cannes may have a [illegible] to act upon it. The blessings of family life continue to be poured in the largest measure upon my unworthy head. Even my temporal affairs have thriven. Still old age is appointed for the gradual loosening and succeeding snapping of the threads. I visited Lord Stratford when he was, say, 90 or 91 or thereabouts. He said to me, 'It is not a blessing.' As to politics, I think the basis of my mind is laid principally in finance and philanthropy. The prospects of the first are darker than I have ever known them. Those of the second are black also, but with more hope of some early dawn. I do not enter on interior matters. It is so easy to write, but to write honestly nearly impossible. Lady Grosvenor gave me to-day a delightful present of a small crucifix. I am rather too independent of symbol.

This is the last entry in the diaries of seventy years.

At the end of January 1897, the Gladstones betook themselves once more to Lord Rendel's *palazzetto*, as they called it, at Cannes.

I had hoped during this excursion, he journalises, to make much way with my autobiographica. But this was in a large degree frustrated, first by invalidism, next by the eastern question, on which I was finally obliged to write something.[1] Lastly, and not least, by a growing sense

[1] *Letter to the Duke of Westminster.*

of decline in my daily amount of brain force available for serious work. My power to read (but to read very slowly indeed since the cataract came) for a considerable number of hours daily, thank God, continues. This is a great mercy. While on my outing, I may have read of one kind and another, twenty volumes. Novels enter into this list rather considerably. I have begun seriously to ask myself whether I shall ever be able to face 'The Olympian Religion.'

The Queen happened to be resident at Cimiez at this time, and Mr. Gladstone wrote about their last meeting :—

A message came down to us inviting us to go into the hotel and take tea with the Princess Louise. We repaired to the hotel, and had our tea with Miss Paget, who was in attendance. The Princess soon came in, and after a short delay we were summoned into the Queen's presence. No other English people were on the ground. We were shown into a room tolerably, but not brilliantly lighted, much of which was populated by a copious supply of Hanoverian royalties. The Queen was in the inner part of the room, and behind her stood the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge. Notwithstanding my enfeebled sight, my vision is not much impaired for practical purposes in cases such as this, where I am thoroughly familiar with the countenance and whole contour of any person to be seen. My wife preceded, and Mary followed me. The Queen's manner did not show the old and usual vitality. It was still, but at the same time very decidedly kind, such as I had not seen it for a good while before my final resignation. She gave me her hand, a thing which is, I apprehended, rather rare with men, and which had never happened with me during all my life, though that life, be it remembered, had included some periods of rather decided favour. Catherine sat down near her, and I at a little distance. For a good many years she had habitually asked me to sit. My wife spoke freely and a good deal to the Queen, but the answers appeared to me to be very slight. As to myself, I expressed satisfaction at the favourable accounts I had heard of the accommodation at Cimiez, and perhaps a few more words of routine. To speak frankly, it seemed to me that the Queen's peculiar faculty and habit of conversation had disappeared. It was a faculty, not so much the free offspring of a rich and powerful mind, as the fruit of assiduous care with long practice and much opportunity. After about ten minutes, it was signified to us that we had to be presented to all the other royalties, and so passed the remainder of this meeting.

In the early autumn of 1897 he found himself affected by what was supposed to be a peculiar form of catarrh. He went to stay with Mr. Armitstead at Butterstone in Perthshire. I saw him on several occasions afterwards, but this was the last time when I found him with all the freedom, full self-possession, and kind geniality of old days. He was keenly interested at my telling him that I had seen James Martineau, a few days before, in his cottage farther north in Inverness-shire ; that Martineau, though he had now passed his ninety-second milestone on life's road, was able to walk five or six hundred feet up his hillside every day, was at his desk at eight each morning, and read theology a good many hours before he went to

bed at night. Mr. Gladstone's conversation was varied, glowing, full of reminiscence. He had written me in the previous May, hoping among other kind things that 'we may live more and more in sympathy and communion.' I never saw him more attractive than in the short pleasant talks of these three or four days. He discussed some of the sixty or seventy men with whom he had been associated in cabinet life,[1] freely but charitably, though he named two whom he thought to have behaved worse to him than others. He repeated his expression of enormous admiration for Graham. Talked about his own voice. After he had made his long budget speech in 1860, a certain member, supposed to be an operatic expert, came to him and said, 'You must take great care, or else you will destroy the *colour* in your voice.' He had kept a watch on general affairs. The speech of a foreign ruler upon divine right much incensed him. He thought that Lord Salisbury had managed to set the Turk up higher than he had reached since the Crimean war; and his policy had weakened Greece, the most liberal of the eastern communities. We fought over again some old battles of 1886 and 1892-4. Mr. Armitstead had said to him—'Oh, sir, you'll live ten years to come.' 'I do trust,' he answered as he told me this, 'that God in his mercy will spare me that.'

II

Then came months of distress. The facial annoyance grew into acute and continued pain, and to pain he proved to be exceedingly sensitive. It did not master him, but there were moments that seemed almost of collapse and defeat. At last the night was gathering

> About the burning crest
> Of the old, feeble, and day-wearied sun.[2]

They took him at the end of November (1897) to Cannes, to the house of Lord Rendel.

Sometimes at dinner he talked with his host, with Lord Welby, or Lord Acton, with his usual force, but most of the time he lay in extreme suffering and weariness, only glad when they soothed him with music. It was decided that he had better return, and in hope that change of air might even yet be some palliative, he went to Bournemouth which he reached on February 22. For weeks past he had not written nor read, save one letter that he wrote in his journey home to Lady Salisbury upon a rather narrow escape of her husband's in a carriage accident. On March 18 his malady was pronounced incurable, and he learned that it was likely to end in a few weeks. He received the verdict with perfect serenity and with a sense of unutterable relief, for his sufferings had been cruel. Four days later he started home to die. On leaving Bournemouth

[1] For the list see Appendix.

[2] *King John.*

before stepping into the train, he turned round and to those who were waiting on the platform to see him off, he said with quiet gravity, 'God bless you and this place, and the land you love.' At Hawarden he bore the dreadful burden of his pain with fortitude, supported by the ritual ordinances of his church and faith. Music soothed him, the old composers being those he liked best to hear. Messages of sympathy were read to him, and he listened silently or with a word of thanks.

'The might of the whole world's good wishes' flowed to the 'large upper chamber looking to the sunrising, where the aged pilgrim lay.' Men and women of every communion offered up earnest prayers for him. Those who were of no communion, thought with pity, sympathy, and sorrow of

> A Power passing from the earth
> To breathless Nature's dark abyss.

From every rank in social life came outpourings in every key of reverence and admiration. People appeared—as is the way when death comes—to see his life and character as a whole, and to gather up in his personality thus transfigured by the descending shades, all the best hopes and aspirations of their own best hours. A certain grandeur overspread the moving scene. Nothing was there for tears. It was 'no importunate and heavy load.' The force was spent, but it had been nobly spent in devoted and effective service for his country and his fellow-men.

From the Prince of the Black Mountain came a telegram: 'Many years ago, when Montenegro, my beloved country, was in difficulties and in danger, your eloquent voice and powerful pen successfully pleaded and worked on her behalf. At this time vigorous and prosperous, with a bright future before her, she turns with sympathetic eye to the great English statesman to whom she owes so much, and for whose present sufferings she feels so deeply.' And he answered by a message that 'his interest in Montenegro had always been profound, and he prayed that it might prosper and be blessed in all its undertakings.'

Of the thousand salutations of pity and hope none went so much to his heart as one from Oxford—an expression of true feeling, in language worthy of her fame:—

> At yesterday's meeting of the hebdomadal council, wrote the vice-chancellor, an unanimous wish was expressed that I should convey to you the message of our profound sorrow and affection at the sore trouble and distress which you are called upon to endure. While we join in the universal regret with which the nation watches the dark cloud which has fallen upon the evening of a great and impressive life, we believe that Oxford may lay claim to a deeper and more intimate share in this sorrow. Your brilliant career in our university, your long political connection with it, and your fine scholarship, kindled in this place of ancient learning, have linked you to Oxford by no ordinary bond, and

we cannot but hope that you will receive with satisfaction this expression of deep-seated kindliness and sympathy from us.

We pray that the Almighty may support you and those near and dear to you in this trial, and may lighten the load of suffering which you bear with such heroic resignation.

To this he listened most attentively and over it he brooded long, then he dictated to his youngest daughter sentence by sentence at intervals his reply :—

There is no expression of Christian sympathy that I value more than that of the ancient university of Oxford, the God-fearing and God-sustaining university of Oxford. I served her, perhaps mistakenly, but to the best of my ability. My most earnest prayers are hers to the uttermost and to the last.

When May opened, it was evident that the end was drawing near. On the 13th he was allowed to receive visits of farewell from Lord Rosebery and from myself, the last persons beyond his household to see him. He was hardly conscious. On the early morning of the 19th, his family all kneeling around the bed on which he lay in the stupor of coming death, without a struggle he ceased to breathe. Nature outside—wood and wide lawn and cloudless far-off sky—shone at her fairest.

III

On the day after his death, in each of the two Houses the leader made the motion, identical in language in both cases save the few final words about financial provision in the resolution of the Commons :—

That an humble Address be presented to her Majesty praying that her Majesty will be graciously pleased to give directions that the remains of the Right Hon. William Ewart Gladstone be interred at the public charge, and that a monument be erected in the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, Westminster, with an inscription expressive of the public admiration and attachment and of the high sense entertained of his rare and splendid gifts, and of his devoted labours in parliament and in great offices of state, and to assure her Majesty that this House will make good the expenses attending the same.

The language of the movers was worthy of the British parliament at its best, worthy of the station of those who used it, and worthy of the figure commemorated. Lord Salisbury was thought by most to go nearest to the core of the solemnity :—

What is the cause of this unanimous feeling? Of course, he had qualities that distinguished him from all other men ; and you may say that it was his transcendent intellect, his astonishing power of attaching men to him, and the great influence he was able to exert upon the thought and convictions of his contemporaries. But these things, which explain the attachment, the adoration of those whose ideas he represented, would not explain why it is that sentiments almost as fervent are felt and expressed by those whose ideas were not carried out by his

policy. My Lords, I do not think the reason is to be found in anything so far removed from the common feelings of mankind as the abstruse and controversial questions of the policy of the day. They had nothing to do with it. Whether he was right, or whether he was wrong, in all the measures, or in most of the measures which he proposed—those are matters of which the discussion has passed by, and would certainly be singularly inappropriate here; they are really remitted to the judgment of future generations, who will securely judge from experience what we can only decide by forecast. It was on account of considerations more common to the masses of human beings, to the general working of the human mind, than any controversial questions of policy that men recognised in him a man guided—whether under mistaken impressions or not, it matters not—but guided in all the steps he took, in all the efforts that he made, by a high moral ideal. What he sought were the attainments of great ideals, and, whether they were based on sound convictions or not, they could have issued from nothing but the greatest and the purest moral aspirations; and he is honoured by his countrymen, because through so many years, across so many vicissitudes and conflicts, they had recognised this one characteristic of his action, which has never ceased to be felt. He will leave behind him, especially to those who have followed with deep interest the history of the later years—I might almost say the later months of his life—he will leave behind him the memory of a great Christian statesman. Set up necessarily on high—the sight of his character, his motives, and his intentions would strike all the world. They will have left a deep and most salutary influence on the political thought and the social thought of the generation in which he lived, and he will be long remembered not so much for the causes in which he was engaged or the political projects which he favoured, but as a great example, to which history hardly furnishes a parallel, of a great Christian man.

Mr. Balfour, the leader in the Commons, specially spoke of him as 'the greatest member of the greatest deliberative assembly that the world has seen,' and most aptly pointed to Mr. Gladstone's special service in respect of that assembly:—

One service he did, in my opinion incalculable, which is altogether apart from the judgment that we may be disposed to pass upon particular opinions, or particular lines of policy which Mr. Gladstone may from time to time have advocated. Sir, he added a dignity, as he added a weight, to the deliberations of this House by his genius, which I think it is impossible adequately to replace. It is not enough for us to keep up simply a level, though it be a high level, of probity and of patriotism. The mere average of civic virtue is not sufficient to preserve this Assembly from the fate that has overcome so many other Assemblies, products of democratic forces. More than this is required; more than this was given to us by Mr. Gladstone. He brought to our debates a genius which compelled attention, he raised in the public estimation the whole level of our proceedings, and they will be most ready to admit the infinite value of his service who realise how much of public prosperity is involved in the maintenance of the worth of public life, and how perilously difficult most democracies apparently feel it to be to avoid the opposite dangers into which so many of them have fallen.

Sir William Harcourt spoke of him as friend and official colleague :—

I have heard men who knew him not at all, who have asserted that the supremacy of his genius and the weight of his authority oppressed and overbore those who lived with him and those who worked under him. Nothing could be more untrue. Of all chiefs he was the least exacting. He was the most kind, the most tolerant, he was the most placable. How seldom in this House was the voice of personal anger heard from his lips. These are the true marks of greatness.

Lord Rosebery described his gifts and powers, his concentration, the multiplicity of his interests, his labour of every day, and almost of every hour of every day, in fashioning an intellect that was mighty by nature. And besides this panegyric on the departed warrior, he touched with felicity and sincerity a note of true feeling in recalling to his hearers

the solitary and pathetic figure, who for sixty years shared all the sorrows and all the joys of Mr. Gladstone's life, who received his confidence and every aspiration, who shared his triumphs with him and cheered him under his defeats ; who by her tender vigilance, I firmly believe, sustained and prolonged his years.

When the memorial speeches were over the House of Commons adjourned. The Queen, when the day of the funeral came, telegraphed to Mrs. Gladstone from Balmoral :—

My thoughts are much with you to-day, when your dear husband is laid to rest. To-day's ceremony will be most trying and painful for you, but it will be at the same time gratifying to you to see the respect and regret evinced by the nation for the memory of one whose character and intellectual abilities marked him as one of the most distinguished statesmen of my reign. I shall ever gratefully remember his devotion and zeal in all that concerned my personal welfare and that of my family.

IV

It was not at Westminster only that his praise went forth. Famous men, in the immortal words of Pericles to his Athenians, have the whole world for their tomb ; they are commemorated not only by columns and inscriptions in their own land ; in foreign lands too a memorial of them is graven in the hearts of men. So it was here. No other statesman on our glorious roll has touched the imagination of so wide a world.

The colonies through their officers, or more directly, sent to Mrs. Gladstone their expression of trust that the world-wide admiration and esteem of her honoured and illustrious husband would help her to sustain her burden of sorrow. The ambassador of the United States reverently congratulated her and the English race everywhere, upon the glorious completion of a life filled with splendid achievements and consecrated to the noblest purposes. The President followed in the same vein,

and in Congress words were found to celebrate a splendid life and character. The President of the French republic wished to be among the first to associate himself with Mrs. Gladstone's grief:—'By the high liberality of his character,' he said, 'and by the nobility of his political ideal, Mr. Gladstone had worthily served his country and humanity.' The entire French government requested the British ambassador in Paris to convey the expression of their sympathy and assurance of their appreciation, admiration, and respect for the character of the illustrious departed. The Czar of Russia telegraphed to Mrs. Gladstone:—'I have just received the painful news of Mr. Gladstone's decease, and consider it my duty to express to you my feelings of sincere sympathy on the occasion of the cruel and irreparable bereavement which has befallen you, as well as the deep regret which this sad event has given me. The whole of the civilised world will beweep the loss of a great statesman, whose political views were so widely humane and peaceable.'

In Italy the sensation was said to be as great as when Victor Emmanuel or Garibaldi died. The Italian parliament and the prime minister telegraphed to the effect that 'the cruel loss which had just struck England, was a grief sincerely shared by all who are devoted to liberty. Italy has not forgotten, and will never forget, the interest and sympathy of Mr. Gladstone in events that led to its independence.' In the same key, Greece: the King, the first minister, the university, the chamber, declared that he was entitled to the gratitude of the Greek people, and his name would be by them for ever venerated. From Roumania, Macedonia, Norway, Denmark tributes came 'to the great memory of Gladstone, one of the glories of mankind.' Never has so wide and honourable a pomp all over the globe followed an English statesman to the grave.

V

On May 25, the remains were brought from Hawarden, and in the middle of the night the sealed coffin was placed in Westminster Hall, watched until the funeral by the piety of relays of friends. For long hours each day great multitudes filed past the bier. It was a striking demonstration of national feeling, for the procession contained every rank, and contingents came from every part of the kingdom. On Saturday, May 28, the body was committed to the grave in Westminster Abbey. No sign of high honour was absent. The heir to the throne and his son were among those who bore the pall. So were the prime minister and the other leaders of both parties in both Houses. Pall-bearers besides these were Lord Rosebery who had succeeded him as prime minister, the Duke of Rutland who had half a century before been Mr. Gladstone's colleague

at Newark, and Mr. Armitstead and Lord Rendel, who were his private friends. Foreign sovereigns sent their representatives, the Speaker of the House of Commons was there in state, and those were there who had done stout battle against him for long years; those also who had sat with him in council and stood by his side in frowning hours. At the head of the grave was 'the solitary and pathetic figure' of his wife. Even men most averse to all pomps and shows on the occasions and scenes that declare so audibly their nothingness, here were only conscious of a deep and moving simplicity, befitting a great citizen now laid among the kings and heroes. Two years later, the tomb was opened to receive the faithful and devoted companion of his life.

CHAPTER X

FINAL

ANYBODY can see the host of general and speculative questions raised by a career so extraordinary. How would his fame have stood if his political life had ended in 1854, or 1874, or 1881, or 1885? What light does it shed upon the working of the parliamentary system; on the weakness and strength of popular government; on the good and bad of political party; on the superiority of rule by cabinet or by an elected president; on the relations of opinion to law? Here is material for a volume of disquisition, and nobody can ever discuss such speculations without reference to power as it was exercised by Mr. Gladstone. Those thronged halls, those vast progresses, those strenuous orations—what did they amount to? Did they mean a real moulding of opinion, an actual impression, whether by argument or temper or personality or all three, on the minds of hearers? Or was it no more than the same kind of interest that takes men to stage-plays with a favourite performer? This could hardly be, for his hearers gave him long spells of power and a practical authority that was unique and supreme. What thoughts does his career suggest on the relations of Christianity to patriotism, or to empire, or to what has been called neo-paganism? How many points arise as to the dependence of ethics on dogma? These are deep and living and perhaps burning issues, not to be discussed at the end of what the reader may well have found a long journey. They offer themselves for his independent consideration.

I

Mr. Gladstone's own summary of the period in which he had been so conspicuous a figure was this, when for him the drama was at an end:—

> Of his own career, he says, it is a career certainly chargeable with many errors of judgment, but I hope on the whole, governed at least by uprightness of intention and by a desire to learn. The personal aspect may now readily be dismissed as it concerns the past. But the public aspect of the period which closes for me with the fourteen years (so I love to reckon them) of my formal connection with Midlothian is too

important to pass without a word. I consider it as beginning with the Reform Act of Lord Grey's government. That great Act was for England improvement and extension, for Scotland it was political birth, the beginning of a duty and a power, neither of which had attached to the Scottish nation in the preceding period. I rejoice to think how the solemnity of that duty has been recognised, and how that power has been used. The three-score years offer us the pictures of what the historian will recognise as a great legislative and administrative period—perhaps, on the whole, the greatest in our annals. It has been predominantly a history of emancipation—that is of enabling man to do his work of emancipation, political, economical, social, moral, intellectual. Not numerous merely, but almost numberless, have been the causes brought to issue, and in every one of them I rejoice to think that, so far as my knowledge goes, Scotland has done battle for the right.

Another period has opened and is opening still—a period possibly of yet greater moral dangers, certainly a great ordeal for those classes which are now becoming largely conscious of power, and never heretofore subject to its deteriorating influences. These have been confined in their actions to the classes above them, because they were its sole possessors. Now is the time for the true friend of his country to remind the masses that their present political elevation is owing to no principles less broad and noble than these—the love of liberty, of liberty for all without distinction of class, creed or country, and the resolute preference of the interests of the whole to any interest, be it what it may, of a narrower scope.[1]

A year later, in bidding farewell to his constituents 'with sentiments of gratitude and attachment that can never be effaced,' he proceeds :—

Though in regard to public affairs many things are disputable, there are some which belong to history and which have passed out of the region of contention. It is, for example as I conceive, beyond question that the century now expiring has exhibited since the close of its first quarter a period of unexampled activity both in legislative and administrative changes ; that these changes, taken in the mass, have been in the direction of true and most beneficial progress ; that both the conditions and the franchises of the people have made in relation to the former state of things, an extraordinary advance ; that of these reforms an overwhelming proportion have been effected by direct action of the liberal party, or of statesmen such as Peel and Canning, ready to meet odium or to forfeit power for the public good ; and that in every one of the fifteen parliaments the people of Scotland have decisively expressed their convictions in favour of this wise, temperate, and in every way remarkable policy.[2]

To charge him with habitually rousing popular forces into dangerous excitement, is to ignore or misread his action in some of the most critical of his movements. 'Here is a man,' said Huxley, 'with the greatest intellect in Europe, and yet he debases it by simply following majorities and the crowd.' He was called a mere mirror of the passing humours and intellectual confusions of the popular mind. He had nothing, said his detractors, but a sort of clever pilot's eye for winds and currents,

[1] Letter to Sir John Cowan, March 17, 1894.
[2] July 1, 1895.

and the rising of the tide to the exact height that would float him and his cargo over the bar. All this is the exact opposite of the truth. What he thought was that the statesman's gift consisted in insight into the facts of a particular era, disclosing the existence of material for forming public opinion and directing public opinion to a given purpose. In every one of his achievements of high mark—even in his last marked failure of achievement—he expressly formed, or endeavoured to form and create, the public opinion upon which he knew that in the last resort he must depend.

We have seen the triumph of 1853.[1] Did he, in renewing the most hated of taxes, run about anxiously feeling the pulse of public opinion? On the contrary, he grappled with the facts with infinite labour—and half his genius was labour—he built up a great plan; he carried it to the cabinet; they warned him that the House of Commons would be against him; the officials of the treasury told him the Bank would be against him; that a strong press of commercial interests would be against him. Like the bold and sinewy athlete that he always was, he stood to his plan; he carried the cabinet; he persuaded the House of Commons; he vanquished the Bank and the hostile interests; and in the words of Sir Stafford Northcote, he changed and turned for many years to come, a current of public opinion, that seemed far too powerful for any minister to resist. In the tempestuous discussions during the seventies on the policy of this country in respect of the Christian races of the Balkan Peninsula, he with his own voice created, moulded, inspired, and kindled with resistless flame the whole of the public opinion that eventually guided the policy of the nation with such admirable effect both for its own fame, and for the good of the world. Take again the Land Act of 1881, in some ways the most deep-reaching of all his legislative achievements. Here he had no flowing tide, every current was against him. He carried his scheme against the ignorance of the country, against the prejudice of the country, and against the standing prejudices of both branches of the legislature, who were steeped from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot in the strictest doctrines of contract.

Then his passion for economy, his ceaseless war against public profusion, his insistence upon rigorous keeping of the national accounts—in this great department of affairs he led and did not follow. In no sphere of his activities was he more strenuous, and in no sphere, as he must well have known, was he less likely to win popularity. For democracy is spendthrift; if, to be sure, we may not say that most forms of government are apt to be the same.

In a survey of Mr. Gladstone's performances, some would place this of which I have last spoken, as foremost among his

[1] See vol. i. p. 339.

services to the country. Others would call him greatest in the associated service of a skilful handling and adjustment of the burden of taxation; or the strengthening of the foundations of national prosperity and well-being by his reformation of the tariff. Yet others again choose to remember him for his share in guiding the successive extensions of popular power, and simplifying and purifying electoral machinery. Irishmen at least, and others so far as they are able to comprehend the history and vile wrongs and sharp needs of Ireland, will have no doubt what rank in legislation they will assign to the establishment of religious equality and agrarian justice in that portion of the realm. Not a few will count first the vigour with which he repaired what had been an erroneous judgment of his own and of vast hosts of his countrymen, by his courage in carrying through the submission of the Alabama claims to arbitration. Still more, looking from west to east, in this comparison among his achievements, will judge alike in its result and in the effort that produced it, nothing equal to the valour and insight with which he burst the chains of a mischievous and degrading policy as to the Ottoman empire. When we look at this exploit, how in face of an opponent of genius and authority and a tenacity not inferior to his own, in face of strongly rooted tradition on behalf of the Turk, and an easily roused antipathy against the Russian, by his own energy and strength of arm he wrested the rudder from the hand of the helmsman and put about the course of the ship, and held England back from the enormity of trying to keep several millions of men and women under the yoke of barbaric oppression and misrule,—we may say that this great feat alone was fame enough for one statesman. Let us make what choice we will of this or that particular achievement, how splendid a list it is of benefits conferred and public work effectually performed. Was he a good parliamentary tactician, they ask? Was his eye sure, his hand firm, his measurement of forces, distances, and possibilities of change in wind and tide accurate? Did he usually hit the proper moment for a magisterial intervention? Experts did not always agree on his quality as tactician. At least he was pilot enough to bring many valuable cargoes safely home.

He was one of the three statesmen in the House of Commons of his own generation who had the gift of large and spacious conception of the place and power of England in the world, and of the policies by which she could maintain it. Cobden and Disraeli were the other two. Wide as the poles asunder in genius, in character, and in the mark they made upon the nation, yet each of these three was capable of wide surveys from high eminence. But Mr. Gladstone's performances in the sphere of active government were beyond comparison.

Again he was often harshly judged by that tenacious class who insist that if a general principle be sound, there can never

be a reason why it should not be applied forthwith, and that a rule subject to exceptions is not worth calling a rule; and the worst of it is that these people are mostly the salt of the earth. In their impatient moments they dismissed him as an opportunist, but whenever there was a chance of getting anything done, they mostly found that he was the only man with courage and resolution enough to attempt to do it. In thinking about him we have constantly to remember, as Sir George Lewis said, that government is a very rough affair at best, a huge rough machine, not the delicate springs, wheels, and balances of a chronometer, and those concerned in working it have to be satisfied with what is far below the best. 'Men have no business to talk of disenchantment,' Mr. Gladstone said; 'ideals are never realised.' That is no reason, he meant, why men should not persist and toil and hope, and this is plainly the true temper for the politician. Yet he did not feed upon illusions. 'The history of nations,' he wrote in 1876, 'is a melancholy chapter; that is, the history of governments is one of the most immoral parts of human history.'

II

It might well be said that Mr. Gladstone took too little, rather than too much trouble to be popular. His religious conservatism puzzled and irritated those who admired and shared his political liberalism, just as churchmen watched with uneasiness and suspicion his radical alliances. Neither those who were churchmen first, nor those whose interests were keenest in politics, could comprehend the union of what seemed incompatibles, and because they could not comprehend they sometimes in their shallower humours doubted his sincerity. Mr. Gladstone was never, after say 1850, really afraid of disestablishment; on the contrary he was much more afraid of the perils of establishment for the integrity of the faith. Yet political disestablishers often doubted him, because they had not logic enough to see that a man may be a fervent believer in anglican institutions and what he thinks catholic tradition, and yet be as ready as Cavour for the principle of free church in free state.

It is curious that some of the things that made men suspicious, were in fact the liveliest tokens of his sincerity and simplicity. With all his power of political imagination, yet his mind was an intensely literal mind. He did not look at an act or a decision from the point of view at which it might be regarded by other people. Ewelme, the mission to the Ionian Islands, the royal warrant, the affair of the judicial committee, vaticanism, and all the other things that gave offence, and stirred misgivings even in friends, showed that the very last question he ever asked himself was how his action would look; what construction might be put upon it, or even would pretty certainly be put upon

it; whom it would encourage, whom it would estrange, whom it would perplex. Is the given end right, he seemed to ask; what are the surest means; are the means as right as the end, as right as they are sure? But right—on strict and literal construction. What he sometimes forgot was that in political action, construction is part of the act, nay, may even be its most important part.[1]

The more you make of his errors, the more is the need to explain his vast renown, the long reign of his authority, the substance and reality of his powers. We call men great for many reasons apart from service wrought or eminence of intellect or even from force and depth of character. To have taken a leading part in transactions of decisive moment; to have proved himself able to meet demands on which high issues hung; to combine intellectual qualities, though moderate yet adequate and sufficient, with the moral qualities needed for the given circumstance—with daring, circumspection, energy, intrepid initiative; to have fallen in with one of those occasions in the world that impart their own greatness even to a mediocre actor, and surround his name with a halo not radiating from within but shed upon him from without—in all these and many other ways men come to be counted great. Mr. Gladstone belongs to the rarer class who acquired authority and fame by transcendent qualities of genius within, in half independence of any occasions beyond those they create for themselves.

III

Of his attitude in respect of church parties, it is not for me to speak. He has himself described at least one aspect of it in a letter to an inquirer, which would be a very noble piece by whomsoever written, and in the name of whatsoever creed or no-creed, whether Christian or Rationalist or Nathan the Wise Jew's creed. It was addressed to a clergyman who seems to have asked of what section Mr. Gladstone considered himself an adherent:—

Feb. 4, 1865.—It is impossible to misinterpret either the intention or the terms of your letter; and I thank you for it sincerely. But I cannot answer the question which you put to me, and I think I can even satisfy you that with my convictions I should do wrong in replying to it in any manner. Whatever reason I may have for being painfully and daily conscious of every kind of unworthiness, yet I am sufficiently aware of the dignity of religious belief to have been throughout a political life, now in its thirty-third year, steadily resolved never by my own voluntary act to make it the subject of any compact or assurance with a view to a political object. You think (and pray do not suppose I make this matter of complaint) that I have been associated with one party in the church of England, and that I may now lean rather towards another. . . . There is no one about whom information can be more easily had than myself. I have had

[1] See *Guardian*, Feb. 25, 1874.

and have friends of many colours, churchmen high and low, presbyterians, Greeks, Roman catholics, dissenters, who can speak abundantly, though perhaps not very well of me. And further, as member for the university, I have honestly endeavoured at all times to put my constituents in possession of all I could convey to them that could be considered as in the nature of a fact, by answering as explicitly as I was able all questions relating to the matters, and they are numerous enough, on which I have had to act or speak. Perhaps I shall surprise you by what I have yet further to say. I have never by any conscious act yielded my allegiance to any person or party in matters of religion. You and others may have called me (without the least offence) a churchman of some particular kind, and I have more than once seen announced in print my own secession from the church of England. These things I have not commonly contradicted, for the atmosphere of religious controversy and contradiction is as odious as the atmosphere of mental freedom is precious, to me; and I have feared to lose the one and be drawn into the other, by heat and bitterness creeping into the mind. If another chooses to call himself, or to call me, a member of this or that party, I am not to complain. But I respectfully claim the right not to call myself so, and on this claim, I have I believe acted throughout my life, without a single exception; and I feel that were I to waive it, I should at once put in hazard that allegiance to Truth, which is at once the supreme duty and the supreme joy of life. I have only to add the expression of my hope that in what I have said there is nothing to hurt or to offend you; and, if there be, very heartily to wish it unsaid.

Yet there was never the shadow of mistake about his own fervent faith. As he said to another correspondent:—

Feb. 5, 1876.—I am in principle a strong denominationalist. 'One fold and one shepherd' was the note of early Christendom. The shepherd is still one and knows his sheep; but the folds are many; and, without condemning any others, I am of opinion that it is best for us all that we should all of us be jealous for the honour of whatever we have and hold as positive truth, appertaining to the Divine Word and the foundation and history of the Christian community. I admit that this question becomes one of circumstance and degree, but I take it as I find it defined for myself by and in my own position.

IV

Of Mr. Gladstone as orator and improvisatore, enough has been said and seen. Besides being orator and statesman he was scholar and critic. Perhaps scholar in his interests, not in abiding contribution. The most copious of his productions in this delightful but arduous field was the three large volumes on *Homer and the Homeric Age*, given to the world in 1858. Into what has been well called the whirlpool of Homeric controversies, the reader shall not here be dragged. Mr. Gladstone himself gave them the go-by, with an indifference and disdain such as might have been well enough in the economic field if exhibited towards a protectionist farmer, or a partisan of retaliatory duties on manufactured goods, but that were hardly to the point in dealing with profound and original critics.

What he too contemptuously dismissed as Homeric 'bubble-schemes,' were in truth centres of scientific illumination. At the end of the eighteenth century Wolf's *Prolegomena* appeared, in which he advanced, with hints from earlier scholars, the theory that Homer was no single poet, nor a name for two poets, nor an individual at all; the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were collections of independent lays, folk-lore and folk-songs connected by a common set of themes, and edited, redacted, or compacted about the middle of the sixth century before Christ. A learned man of our own day has said that F. A. Wolf ought to be counted one of the half dozen writers that within the last three centuries have most influenced thought. This would bring Wolf into line with Descartes, Newton, Locke, Kant, Rousseau, or whatever other five master-spirits of thought from then to now the judicious reader may select. The present writer has assuredly no competence to assign Wolf's place in the history of modern criticism, but straying aside for a season from the green pastures of Hansard, and turning over again the slim volume of a hundred and fifty pages in which Wolf discusses his theme, one may easily discern a fountain of broad streams of modern thought (apart from the particular thesis) that to Mr. Gladstone, by the force of all his education and his deepest prepossessions, were in the highest degree chimerical and dangerous.

He once wrote to Lord Acton (1889) about the Old Testament and Mosaic legislation :—

> Now I think that the most important parts of the argument have in a great degree a solid standing ground apart from the destructive criticism on dates and on the text: and I am sufficiently aware of my own rawness and ignorance in the matter not to allow myself to judge definitely, or condemn. I feel also that I have a prepossession derived from the criticisms in the case of Homer. Of them I have a very bad opinion, not only in themselves, but as to the levity, precipitancy, and shallowness of mind which they display; and here I do venture to speak, because I believe myself to have done a great deal more than any of the destructives in the examination of the text, which is the true source of the materials of judgment. They are a soulless lot; but there was a time when they had possession of the public ear as much I suppose as the Old Testament destructives now have, within their own precinct. It is only the constructive part of their work on which I feel tempted to judge; and I must own that it seems to me sadly wanting in the elements of rational probability.

This unpromising method is sufficiently set out when he says :—'I find in the plot of the *Iliad* enough of beauty, order, and structure, not merely to sustain the supposition of its own unity, but to bear an independent testimony, should it be still needed, to the existence of a personal and individual Homer as its author.'[1] From such a method no permanent contribution could come.

[1] iii. p. 396.

Yet scholars allow that Mr. Gladstone in these three volumes, as well as in *Juventus Mundi* and his *Homeric Primer*, has added not a little to our scientific knowledge of the Homeric poems,[1] by his extraordinary mastery of the text, the result of unwearied and prolonged industry, aided by a memory both tenacious and ready. Taking his own point of view, moreover, anybody who wishes to have his feeling about the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as delightful poetry refreshed and quickened, will find inspiring elements in the profusion, the eager array of Homer's own lines, the diligent exploration of aspects and bearings hitherto unthought of. The 'theo-mythology' is commonly judged fantastic, and has been compared by sage critics to Warburton's *Divine Legation*—the same comprehensive general reading, the same heroic industry in marshalling the particulars of proof, the same dialectical strength of arm, and all brought to prove an unsound proposition.[2] Yet the comprehensive reading and the particulars of proof are by no means without an interest of their own, whatever we may think of the proposition; and here, as in all his literary writing distinguished from polemics, he abounds in the ethical elements. Here perhaps more than anywhere else he impresses us by his love of beauty in all its aspects and relations, in the human form, in landscape, in the affections, in animals, including above all else that sense of beauty which made his Greeks take it as one of the names for nobility in conduct. Conington, one of the finest of scholars, then lecturing at Oxford on Latin poets and deep in his own Virgilian studies, which afterwards bore such admirable fruit, writes at length (Feb. 14, 1857) to say how grateful he is to Mr. Gladstone for the care with which he has pursued into details a view of Virgil that they hold substantially in common, and proceeds with care and point to analyse the quality of the Roman poet's art, as some years later he defended against Munro the questionable proposition of the superiority in poetic style of the graceful, melodious, and pathetic Virgil to Lucretius's mighty muse.

No field has been more industriously worked for the last forty years than this of the relations of paganism to the historic religion that followed it in Europe. The knowledge and the speculations into which Mr. Gladstone was thus initiated in the sixties may now seem crude enough; but he deserves some credit in English, though not in view of German, speculation for an early perception of an unfamiliar region of comparative science, whence many a product most unwelcome to him and alien to his own beliefs has been since extracted. When all is said, however, Mr. Gladstone's place is not in literary or critical history, but elsewhere.

His style is sometimes called Johnsonian, but surely without

[1] For instance, Geddes, *Problem of the Homeric Poems*, 1878, p. 16.

[2] Pattison, ii. p. 160.

good ground. Johnson was not involved and he was clear, and neither of these things can always be said of Mr. Gladstone. Some critic charged him in 1840 with 'prolix clearness.' The old charge, says Mr. Gladstone upon this, was 'obscure compression. I do not doubt that both may be true, and the former may have been the result of a well-meant effort to escape from the latter.' He was fond of abstract words, or the nearer to abstract the better, and the more general the better. One effect of this was undoubtedly to give an indirect, almost a shifty, air that exasperated plain people. Why does he beat about the bush, they asked; why cannot he say what he means? A reader might have to think twice or thrice or twenty times before he could be sure that he interpreted correctly. But then people are so apt to think once, or half of once; to take the meaning that suits their own wish or purpose best, and then to treat that as the only meaning. Hence their perplexity and wrath when they found that other doors were open, and they thought a mistake due to their own hurry was the result of a juggler's trick. On the other hand a good writer takes all the pains he can to keep his reader out of such scrapes.

His critical essays on Tennyson and Macaulay are excellent. They are acute, discriminating, generous. His estimate of Macaulay, apart from a piece of polemical church history at the end, is perhaps the best we have. 'You make a very just remark,' said Acton to him, 'that Macaulay was afraid of contradicting his former self, and remembered all he had written since 1825. At that time his mind was formed, and so it remained. What literary influences acted on the formation of his political opinions, what were his religious sympathies, and what is his exact place among historians, you have rather avoided discussing. There is still something to say on these points.' To Tennyson Mr. Gladstone believed himself to have been unjust, especially in the passages of *Maud* devoted to the war-frenzy, and when he came to reprint the article he admitted that he had not sufficiently remembered that he was dealing with a dramatic and imaginative composition.[1] As he frankly said of himself, he was not strong in the faculties of the artist, but perhaps Tennyson himself in these passages was prompted much more by politics than by art. Of this piece of retractation the poet truly said, 'Nobody but a noble-minded man would have done that.'[2] Mr. Gladstone would most likely have chosen to call his words a qualification rather than a recantation. In either case, it does not affect passages that give the finest expression to one of the very deepest convictions of his life,—that war, whatever else we may choose to say of it, is no antidote for Mammon-worship and can never be a cure for moral evils:—

[1] *Gleanings*, ii. p. 147. [2] *Life*, i. p. 398.

It is, indeed, true that peace has its moral perils and temptations for degenerate man, as has every other blessing, without exception, that he can receive from the hand of God. It is, moreover, not less true that, amidst the clash of arms, the noblest forms of character may be reared, and the highest acts of duty done; that these great and precious results may be due to war as their cause; and that one high form of sentiment in particular, the love of country, receives a powerful and general stimulus from the bloody strife. But this is as the furious cruelty of Pharaoh made place for the benign virtue of his daughter; as the butchering sentence of Herod raised without doubt many a mother's love into heroic sublimity; as plague, as famine, as fire, as flood, as every curse and every scourge that is wielded by an angry Providence for the chastisement of man, is an appointed instrument for tempering human souls in the seven-times heated furnace of affliction, up to the standard of angelic and archangelic virtue.

War, indeed, has the property of exciting much generous and noble feeling on a large scale; but with this special recommendation it has, in its modern forms especially, peculiar and unequalled evils. As it has a wider sweep of desolating power than the rest, so it has the peculiar quality that it is more susceptible of being decked in gaudy trappings, and of fascinating the imagination of those whose proud and angry passions it inflames. But it is, on this very account, a perilous delusion to teach that war is a cure for moral evil, in any other sense than as the sister tribulations are. The eulogies of the frantic hero in *Maud*, however, deviate into grosser folly. It is natural that such vagaries should overlook the fixed laws of Providence. Under these laws the mass of mankind is composed of men, women, and children who can but just ward off hunger, cold, and nakedness; whose whole ideas of Mammon-worship are comprised in the search for their daily food, clothing, shelter, fuel; whom any casualty reduces to positive want; and whose already low estate is yet further lowered and ground down, when 'the blood-red blossom of war flames with its heart of fire.' . . .

Still war had, in times now gone by, ennobling elements and tendencies of the less sordid kind. But one inevitable characteristic of modern war is, that it is associated throughout in all particulars, with a vast and most irregular formation of commercial enterprise. There is no incentive to Mammon-worship so remarkable as that which it affords. The political economy of war is now one of its most commanding aspects. Every farthing, with the smallest exceptions conceivable, of the scores or hundreds of millions which a war may cost, goes directly, and very violently, to stimulate production, though it is intended ultimately for waste or for destruction. Even apart from the fact that war suspends, *ipso facto*, every rule of public thrift, and tends to sap honesty itself in the use of the public treasure for which it makes such unbounded calls, it therefore is the greatest feeder of that lust of gold which we are told is the essence of commerce, though we had hoped it was only its occasional besetting sin. It is, however, more than this; for the regular commerce of peace is tameness itself compared with the gambling spirit which war, through the rapid shiftings and high prices which it brings, always introduces into trade. In its moral operation it more resembles, perhaps the finding of a new gold-field, than anything else.

More remarkable than either of these two is his piece on Leopardi (1850), the Italian poet, whose philosophy and frame

of mind, said Mr. Gladstone, 'present more than any other that we know, more even than that of Shelley, the character of unrelieved, unredeemed desolation — the very qualities in it which attract pitying sympathy, depriving it of all seductive power.' It is curious that he should have selected one whose life lay along a course like Leopardi's for commemoration, as a man who in almost every branch of mental exertion seems to have had the capacity for attaining, and generally at a single bound, the very highest excellence. 'There are many things,' he adds, 'in which Christians would do well to follow him: in the warmth of his attachments; in the moderation of his wants; in his noble freedom from the love of money; in his all-conquering assiduity.'[1] Perhaps the most remarkable sentence of all is this:—'. . . what is not needful, and is commonly wrong, namely, is to pass a judgment on our fellow-creatures. Never let it be forgotten that there is scarcely a single moral action of a single man of which other men can have such a knowledge, in its ultimate grounds, its surrounding incidents, and the real determining causes of its merits, as to warrant their pronouncing a conclusive judgment upon it.'

The translation of poetry into poetry, as Coleridge said, is difficult because the translator must give brilliancy without the warmth of original conception, from which such brilliancy would follow of its own accord. But we must not judge Mr. Gladstone's translation either of Horace's odes or of detached pieces from Greek or Italian, as we should judge the professed man of letters or poet like Coleridge himself. His pieces are the diversions of the man of affairs, with educated tastes and interest in good literature. Perhaps the best single piece is his really noble rendering of Manzoni's noble ode on the death of Napoleon; for instance:—

From Alp to farthest Pyramid,
From Rhine to Mansanar,
How sure his lightning's flash foretold
His thunderbolts of war!
To Don from Scilla's height they roar,
From North to Southern shore.
And this was glory? After-men,
Judge the dark problem. Low
We to the Mighty Maker bend
The while, Who planned to show
What vaster mould Creative Will
With him could fill.

. . . . . .

As on the shipwrecked mariner
The weltering wave's descent—
The wave, o'er which, a moment since,
For distant shores he bent
And bent in vain, his eager eye;

[1] *Gleanings*, ii. p. 129.

So on that stricken head
Came whelming down the mighty Past.
How often did his pen
Essay to tell the wondrous tale
For after times and men,
And o'er the lines that could not die
His hand lay dead.

How often, as the listless day
In silence died away,
He stood with lightning eye deprest,
And arms across his breast,
And bygone years, in rushing train,
Smote on his soul amain:
The breezy tents he seemed to see,
And the battering cannon's course,
And the flashing of the infantry,
And the torrent of the horse,
And, obeyed as soon as heard,
Th' ecstatic word.

Always let us remember that his literary life was part of the rest of his life, as literature ought to be. He was no mere reader of many books, used to relieve the strain of mental anxiety or to slake the thirst of literary or intellectual curiosity. Reading with him in the days of his full vigour was a habitual communing with the master spirits of mankind, as a vivifying and nourishing part of life. As we have seen, he would not read Dante in the session, nor unless he could have a large draught. Here as elsewhere in the ordering of his days he was methodical, systematic, full.

V

Though man of action, yet Mr. Gladstone too has a place by character and influences among what we may call the abstract, moral, spiritual forces that stamped the realm of Britain in his age. In a new time, marked in an incomparable degree by the progress of science and invention, by vast mechanical, industrial, and commercial development, he accepted it all, he adjusted his statesmanship to it all, nay, he revelled in it all, as tending to ameliorate the lot of the 'mass of men, women, and children who can just ward off hunger, cold, and nakedness.' He did not rail at his age, he strove to help it. Following Walpole and Cobden and Peel in the policies of peace, he knew how to augment the material resources on which our people depend. When was Britain stronger, richer, more honoured among the nations—I do not say always among the diplomatic chanceries and governments—than in the years when Mr. Gladstone was at the zenith of his authority among us? When were her armed forces by sea and land more adequate for defence of every interest? When was her material resource sounder? When was her moral credit higher? Besides all this, he upheld a golden lamp.

The unending revolutions of the world are for ever bringing old phases uppermost again. Events from season to season are taken to teach sinister lessons, that the Real is the only Rational, force is the test of right and wrong, the state has nothing to do with restraints of morals, the ruler is emancipated. Speculations in physical science were distorted for alien purposes, and survival of the fittest was taken to give brutality a more decent name. Even new conceptions and systems of history may be twisted into release of statesmen from the conscience of Bishop Butler's plain man. This gospel it was Mr. Gladstone's felicity to hold at bay. Without bringing back the cosmopolitanism of the eighteenth century, without sharing all the idealisms of the middle of the nineteenth, he resisted with his whole might the odious contention that moral progress in the relations of nations and states to one another is an illusion and a dream.

This vein perhaps brings us too near to the regions of dissertation. Let us rather leave off with thoughts and memories of one who was a vivid example of public duty and of private faithfulness; of a long career that with every circumstance of splendour, amid all the mire and all the poisons of the world, lighted up in practice even for those who have none of his genius and none of his power his own precept, 'Be inspired with the belief that life is a great and noble calling; not a mean and grovelling thing, that we are to shuffle through as we can, but an elevated and lofty destiny.'

APPENDIX

CHOICE OF PROFESSION

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Mr. Gladstone to his Father

Cuddesdon, Aug. 4, 1830.—My beloved Father,—I have a good while refrained from addressing you on a subject of importance and much affecting my own future destiny, from a supposition that your time and thoughts have been much occupied for several months past by other matters of great interest in succession. Now, however, believing you to be more at leisure, I venture to bring it before you. It is, as you will have anticipated, the decision of the profession to which I am to look forward for life. Above eighteen months have now passed since you spoke to me of it at Seaforth, and most kindly desired me, if unable then to make up my mind to go into the law, to take some time to consider calmly of the whole question.

It would have been undutiful to trouble you with a recurrence of it, until such a period had been suffered to elapse, as would suffice to afford, by the effects it should itself produce, some fair criterion and presumption of the inclination which my mind was likely to adopt in reference to the *final* decision. At the same time it would also have been undutiful, and most repugnant to my feelings, to permit the prolongation of that intervening period to such an extent, as to give the shadow of a reason to suppose that anything approaching to reserve had been the cause of my silence. The present time seems to lie between these two extremes, and therefore to render it incumbent on me to apprise you of the state of my own views.

I trust it is hardly necessary to specify my knowledge that when I speak of 'the state of my own views' on this question, I do so not of right but by sufferance, by invitation from you, by that more than parental kindness and indulgence with which I have ever met at my parents' hands, which it would be as absurd to make a matter of *formal* acknowledgment as it would be impossible to repay, and for which I can only say, and I say it from the bottom of my heart, may God reward them with His best and choicest gifts, eternal, unfading in the heavens.

If then I am to advert to the disposition of my own mind as regards this matter, I cannot avoid perceiving that it has inclined to the ministerial office, for what has now become a considerable period, with a bias at first uncertain and intermittent, but which has regularly and rapidly

increased in force and permanence. It has not been owing as far as I can myself discern, to the operation of any external cause whatever: nor of internal ones to any others than those which work their effects in the most gradual and imperceptible manner. Day after day it has grown upon and into my habit of feeling and desire. It has been gradually strengthened by those small accessions of power, each of which singly it would be utterly impossible to trace, but which collectively have not only produced a desire of a certain description, but have led me by reasonings often weighed and sifted and re-sifted to the best of my ability, to the deliberate conclusion which I have stated above. I do not indeed mean to say that there has been *no* time within this period at which I have felt a longing for other pursuits; but such feelings have been unstable and temporary; that which I now speak of is the permanent and habitual inclination of my mind. And such too, I think, it is likely to continue; as far at least as I can venture to think I see anything belonging to the future, or can anticipate the continuance of any one desire, feeling, or principle, in a mind so wayward and uncertain as my own — so far do I believe that this sentiment will remain.

It gives me pain, great pain, to communicate anything which I have even the remotest apprehension can give the slightest annoyance to you. I trust this will not do so; although I fear it may. But though fearing it may, I feel it is my duty to do it: because I have only these three alternatives before me. First, to delay communication to some subsequent opportunity: but as I have no fair prospect of being able *then* to convey a different statement, this plan would be attended with no advantage whatever, as far as I can see. Secondly, to dissemble my feelings: an alternative on which if I said another word I should be behaving undutifully and wickedly towards you. Thirdly, to follow the course I have now chosen, I trust with no feelings but those of the most profound affection, and of unfeigned grief that as far as my own view is concerned, I am unable to make it coincide with yours. I say, *as far* as my own view goes, because I do not now see that my own view can, or ought to stand for a moment in the way of your desires. In the hands of my parents, therefore, I am left. But lest you should be led to suppose that I have never reasoned with myself on this matter, but yielded to blind impulses or transitory whims, I will state, not indeed at length, but with as much simplicity and clearness as I am able, some of the motives which seem to me to urge me with an irresistible accumulation of moral force, to this conclusion, and this alone. In the first place, I would say that my own state and character is *not* one of them; nor, I believe, could any views of that character be compatible with their existence and reception, but that in which it now appears to me: namely, as one on which I can look with no degree of satisfaction whatever, and for the purification of which I can only direct my eyes and offer up my prayers to the throne of God.

First, then, with reference to the *dignity* of this office, I know none to compare with it; none which can compete with the grandeur of its end or of its means—the end, the glory of God, and the means, the restoration of man to that image of his Maker which is now throughout the world so lamentably defaced. True indeed it is, that there are other fields for the use and improvement of all which God lends to us, which are wide, dignified, beneficial, desirable: desirable in the first and

highest degree, *if we had not this.* But as long as this field continues, and as long as it continues unfilled, I do not see how I am to persuade myself that any powers, be they the meanest or the greatest, can be *so* profitably or *so* nobly employed as in the performance of this sublime duty. And that this field is *not* yet filled, how can any one doubt who casts his eyes abroad over the moral wilderness of this world, who contemplates the pursuits, desires, designs, and principles of the beings that move so busily in it to and fro, without an object beyond the finding food, be it mental or bodily, for the *present* moment or the *present* life—it matters little which—or beyond ministering to the desires, under whatever modification they may appear, of self-will and self-love? When I look to the standard of habit and principle adopted in the world at large, and then divert my eyes for a moment from that spectacle to the standard fixed and the picture delineated in the book of revelation, then, my beloved father, the conviction flashes on my soul with a moral force I cannot resist, and would not if I could, that the vineyard still wants labourers, that 'the kingdoms of this world are not yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ,' and that *till* they are become such, till the frail race of Adam is restored to the knowledge and the likeness of his Maker, till universally and throughout the wide world the will of God is become our delight, and its accomplishment our first and last desire, there can be no claim so solemn and imperative as that which even now seems to call to us with the voice of God from heaven, and to say 'I have given Mine own Son for this rebellious and apostate world, the sacrifice is offered and accepted, but you, you who are basking in the sunbeams of Christianity, you who are blessed beyond measure, and, oh, how beyond desert in parents, in friends, in every circumstance and adjunct that can sweeten your pilgrimage, why will you not bear to fellow-creatures sitting in darkness and the shadow of death the tidings of this universal and incomprehensible love?'

In this, I believe, is included the main reason which influences me; a reason as full of joy as of glory; that transcendent reason, in comparison with which every other object seems to dwindle into utter and absolute insignificance. But I would not conceal from you—why should I?—that which I cannot conceal from myself: that the darker side of this great picture sometimes meets me, and it is vain that, shuddering, I attempt to turn away from it. My mind involuntarily reverts to the sad and solemn conviction that a fearfully great portion of the world round me is dying in sin. This conviction is the result of that same comparison I have mentioned before, between the principles and practices it embraces, and those which the Almighty authoritatively enjoins: and *entertaining it* as I do, how, my beloved parent, can I bear to think of my own seeking to wanton in the pleasures of life (I mean even its innocent pleasures), or to give up my heart to its business, while my fellow-creatures, to whom I am bound by every tie of human sympathies, of a common sinfulness and a common redemption, day after day are sinking into death. I mean, not the death of the body, which is but a gate either to happiness or to misery, but that of the soul, the true and the only true death. Can I, with this persuasion engrossing me, be justified in inactivity? or in any measure short of the most direct and most effective means of meeting, if in *any degree* it be possible, these horrible calamities? Nor is impotency and incompetency any argument on the

other side: if I saw a man drowning I should hold out my hand to help him, although I were uncertain whether my strength would prove sufficient to extricate him or not; how much more strongly, then, is this duty incumbent when there are thousands on thousands perishing in sin and ignorance on every side, and where the stake is not the addition or subtraction of a few short years from a life, which can but be a span, longer or shorter, but the doom, the irrevocable doom of spirits made for God, and once like God, but now alienated and apostate? And the remedy which God has provided for this portentous evil is not like the ponderous and elaborate contrivances of men; its spear is not, like Goliath's, the weaver's beam, but all its weapons are a few pure and simple elements of truth, ill calculated, like the arms of David, in the estimation of the world to attain their object, but yet capable of being wielded by a stripling's hand, and yet more 'mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds.'

What I have said is from the bottom of my heart, and put forward without the smallest reservation of any kind: and I have said it thus, because in duty bound to do it; and having, too, the comfort of the fullest persuasion that even if your judgment should disallow it, your affection would pardon it. It is possible, indeed, that the (as it seems to me) awful consideration which I have last put forward may have been misstated or misapprehended. Would God it may be so! happy should I be to find either by reason or revelation that the principles of this world were other than I have estimated them to be, and consequently that their fate would be other likewise. I may be under darkness and delusion, having consulted with none in this matter; but till it is shown that I am so, I am bound by all the most solemn ties, ties not created in this world nor to be dissolved with it, but eternal and changeless as our spirits and He who made them, to regulate my actions with reference to these all-important truths—the apostasy of man on the one hand, the love of God on the other. Of my duties *to men* as a social being, can any be so important as to tell them of the danger under which I believe them to lie, of the precipice to which I fear many are approaching, while thousands have already fallen headlong, and others again, even while I write, are continuing to fall in a succession of appalling rapidity? Of my duties *to God* as a rational and responsible being, especially as a being for whom in common with all men the precious blood of Christ has been given, can any more imperatively and more persuasively demand all the little I can give than this, the proclaiming that one instance of God's unfathomable love which alone so transcends as almost to swallow up all others? while those others thus transcended and eclipsed are such as would be of themselves by far the highest and holiest obligations man could know, did we not know this.

Thus I have endeavoured to state these truths, if truths they are, at least these convictions, to you, dwelling upon them at a length which may perhaps be tedious and appear affected, simply as I trust, in order to represent them to your mind as much to the life as possible, I mean as nearly as possible in the light in which they have again and again appeared, and do habitually appear, to my own, so as to give you the best means in my power of estimating the strength or detecting the weakness of those grounds on which the conclusions above stated rest. (I have not mentioned the benefit I might hope myself to derive from this course of living compared with others; and yet this consideration,

though here undoubtedly a secondary one, is, I believe, more weighty than any of those which can be advanced in favour of an opposite determination.)

For some time I doubted whether to state reasons at all: fearing that it might appear presumptuous; but I resolved to do it as choosing rather to incur that risk, than the hazarding an appearance of reserve and desire to conceal my real sentiments from one who has a right to see into the bottom of my heart.

Yet one trespass more I must make on your patience. It may perhaps seem that the inducements I have stated are of an unusual character, unsubstantial, romantic, theoretical and not practical. Unusual, indeed, they are: because (though it is not without diffidence that I bring this sweeping charge—indeed, I should not dare to bring it were it not brought elsewhere) it is a rare thing in this world even where right actions are performed to ground them upon right motives. At least, I am convinced that there are fundamental errors on this subject very prevalent—that they are in general fixed far too low, and that the height of our standard of practice must ever be adapted more or less to that of principle. God only knows whether this be right. But hence it has been that I have endeavoured, I trust not improperly, to put these motives forward in the simplicity of that form wherein they seem to me to come down from the throne of God to the hearts of men; and to consider my prospects and obligations, not under all the limitations which a highly artificial state of society might seem to impose upon them, but direct and undiluted; not, in short, as one who has certain pursuits to follow, certain objects of his own to gain, and relations to fulfil, and arrangements to execute—but as a being destined shortly to stand before the judgment seat of God, and there give the decisive account of his actions at the tribunal whose awards admit of no evasion and of no appeal.

That I *have* viewed them in this light I dare not assert; but I have wished and striven to view them so, and to weigh them, and to answer these questions in the same manner as I must answer them on that day when the trumpet of the archangel shall arouse the living and the dead, and when it will be demanded of me in common with all others, how I have kept and how employed that which was committed to my charge. I dare not pretend that I could act even up to the standard here fixed, but I can eye it though distant, with longing hope, and look upwards for the power which I know is all-sufficient, and therefore sufficient to enable even such an one as myself to reach it.

Viewing, then, these considerations in such a light as this, I can come to no other conclusion, at least unaided, than that the work of spreading religion has a claim infinitely transcending all others in dignity, in solemnity, and in usefulness: destined to continue in force until the happy moment come when every human being has been made fully and effectually acquainted with his condition and its remedies—when too, as it seems to me, it will be soon enough—of course, I lay down this rule for myself, provided as I am to the extent of my wants and very far beyond them—to devise other occupations: *now* it behoves me to discharge the overwhelming obligation which summons me to this.

I have scarcely mentioned my beloved mother in the whole of this letter; for though little has ever passed between us on this subject through the medium of language, and nothing whatever, I believe, since

I last spoke with you upon it, yet I have long been well aware of the tendency of her desires, long indeed before my own in any degree coincided with them.

I await with deference and interest the communication of your desires upon this subject: earnestly desiring that if I have said anything through pride or self-love, it may be forgiven me at your hands, and by God through his Son; and that if my statements be false, or exaggerated, or romantic, or impracticable, I may, by His mercy and through your instrumentality or that of others, be brought back to my right mind, and taught to hold the truth of God in all its sobriety as well as in all its force.—And believe me ever, my beloved and honoured father, your affectionate and dutiful son, WM. E. GLADSTONE.

John Gladstone to his Son

Leamington, 10 *Aug.* 1830.

MY BELOVED WILLIAM,—I have read and given my best consideration to your letter, dated the 4th, which I only received yesterday. I did hope that you would have delayed making up your mind on a subject so important as your future pursuits in life must be to yourself and to us all, until you had completed those studies connected with the attainment of the honours or distinctions of which you were so justly ambitious, and on which your mind seemed so bent when we last communicated respecting them. You know my opinion to be, that the field for actual usefulness to our fellow-creatures, where a disposition to exercise it actively exists, is more circumscribed and limited in the occupations and duties of a clergyman, whose sphere of action, unless pluralities are admitted (as I am sure they would not be advocated by you) is necessarily in a great degree confined to his parish, than in those professions or pursuits which lead to a more general knowledge, as well as a more general intercourse with mankind, such as the law, taking it as a basis, and introduction to public life, to which I had looked forward for you, considering you, as I do, peculiarly well qualified to be made thus eminently useful to others, with credit and satisfaction to yourself. There is no doubt but as a clergyman, faithfully and conscientiously discharging the duties of that office to those whose spiritual interests are entrusted to your care, should you eventually be placed in that situation, that you may have both comfort and satisfaction, with few worldly responsibilities, but you will allow me to doubt whether the picture your perhaps too sanguine mind has drawn in your letter before me, would ever be practically realised. Be this as it may, whenever your mind shall be finally made up on this most important subject, I shall trust to its being eventually for your good, whatever that determination may be. In the meantime I am certainly desirous that those studies with which you have been occupied in reading for your degree may be followed up, whether the shorter or longer period may be necessary to prepare you for the results. You are young and have ample time before you. Let nothing be done rashly; be consistent with yourself, and avail yourself of all the advantages placed within your reach. If, when that ordeal is passed, you should continue to think as you now do, I shall not oppose your *then* preparing yourself for the church, but I do hope that your final determination will not until then be taken, and that whatever events may occur in the interval, you will give them such weight and consideration as they may appear to merit. . . . Your

mother is much as usual. — With our united and affectionate love, I ever am your affectionate father JOHN GLADSTONE.

CANADA, 1838

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Jan. 20/38.—To-day there was a meeting on Canada at Sir R. Peel's. There were present Duke of Wellington, Lords Aberdeen, Ripon, Ellenborough, Stanley, Hardinge, and others. . . . Peel said he did not object to throwing out the government provided it were done by us on our own principles; but that to throw them out on radical principles would be most unwise. He agreed that less might have been done, but was not willing to take the responsibility of refusing what the government asked. He thought that this rebellion had given a most convenient opportunity for settling the question of the Canadian constitution, which had long been a thorny one and inaccessible; that if we postponed the settlement by giving the assembly another trial, the revolt would be forgotten, and in colder blood the necessary powers might be refused. He thought that when once you went into a measure of a despotic character, it was well to err, if at all, on the side of sufficiency; Lord Ripon strongly concurred. The duke sat with his hand to his ear, turning from one towards another round the circle as they took up the conversation in succession, and said nothing till directly and pressingly called upon by Peel, a simple but striking example of the self-forgetfulness of a great man.

Jan. 26/38.—I was myself present at about eight hours [*i.e.* on three occasions] of discussion in Peel's house upon the Canadian question and bill, and there was one meeting held to which I was not summoned. The conservative amendments were all adopted in the thoroughly straightforward view of looking simply at the bill and not at the government and the position of parties. Peel used these emphatic words: 'Depend upon it, our course is the direct one; don't do anything that is wrong for the sake of putting them out; don't avoid anything that is right for the sake of keeping them in.' Every one of these points has now been carried without limitation or exception. For the opposition party this is, in familiar language, a feather in its cap. The whole has been carefully, thoroughly, and effectually done. Nothing since I have been in parliament—not even the defeat of the Church Rate measure last year—has been of a kind to tell so strikingly as regards appearances upon the comparative credit of the two parties.

SIR ROBERT PEEL'S GOVERNMENT

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In the great mountain of Mr. Gladstone's papers I have come across an unfinished and undated draft of a letter written by him for the Queen in 1880 *on Sir Robert Peel's government:—*

Mr. Gladstone with his humble duty reverts to the letter which your Majesty addressed to him a few days back, and in which your Majesty condescended to recollect and to remind him of the day now nearly forty years ago, a day he fears not altogether one of pleasure to your Majesty, when together with others he had the honour to be sworn of your

Majesty's privy council. Your Majesty is pleased to pronounce upon the government then installed into office a high eulogy: a eulogy which Mr. Gladstone would presume, as far as he may, to echo. He values it, and values the recollection of the men who principally composed it, because it was, in the first place, a most honourable and high-minded government; because its legislative acts tended greatly, and almost uniformly, to increase the wellbeing of the country, and to strengthen the attachment of the people to the throne and the laws; while it studied in all things to maintain the reverse of an ambitious or disturbing policy.

It was Mr. Gladstone's good fortune to live on terms of intimacy, and even affection, with the greater portion of its principal and more active members until the close of their valued lives; and although he is far from thinking that they, and he himself with them, committed no serious errors, yet it is his conviction that in many of the most important rules of public policy that government surpassed generally the governments which have succeeded it, whether liberal or conservative. Among them he would mention purity in patronage, financial strictness, loyal adherence to the principle of public economy, jealous regard to the rights of parliament, a single eye to the public interest, strong aversion to extension of territorial responsibilities, and a frank admission of the rights of foreign countries as equal to those of their own. With these recollections of the political character of Sir R. Peel and his government Mr. Gladstone has in no way altered his feelings of regard and respect for them. In all the points he has mentioned he would desire to tread in their steps, and in many of them, or at least in some, he has no hope of soon seeing them equalled. The observance of such principles is in his conviction the best means of disarming radicalism of whatever is dangerous in its composition, and he would feel more completely at ease as to the future prospects of this country could he feel more sure of their being faithfully observed.

Mr. Gladstone is, and has been, but a learner through his life, and he can claim no special gift of insight into the future: the history of his life may not be flattering to his self-love, but he has great consolation in believing that the great legislative acts of the last half-century, in most of which he has had some share. . . .

And here the fragment closes.

CRISIS ON THE SUGAR DUTIES. 1844

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In 1841 the whig government raised the question of the sugar duties, and proposed to substitute a protective duty of 12/ per cwt. for the actual or virtual prohibition of foreign sugars which had up to that time subsisted. They were strongly opposed, and decisively beaten. The argument used against them was, I think, twofold. There was the protection plea on behalf of the West Indians whose estates were now worked only by free labour—and there was the great and popular contention that the measure not only admitted sugar the product of slave labour, which we would not allow our own colonies to employ, but that our new supplies would be derived from Brazil, and above all from Cuba and Puerto Rico, where the slave trade was rampant, and was prosecuted on an enormous scale. The government of Sir R. Peel largely modified our system. Its general professions were the abolition of prohibition,

and the reduction of protective duties to a moderate rate. In 1844 it was determined to deal with the sugar duties, and to admit sugar at, I think, a rate of 10/ per cwt. beyond the rate for British-grown. But we had to bear in mind the arguments of 1841, and it was determined that the sugars so to be admitted were to be the product of free labour only. There was some uncertainty from whence they were to come. Java produced sugar largely, under a system involving certain restraints, but as we contended essentially free. The whole argument, however, was difficult and perplexed, and a parliamentary combination was formed against the government. The opposition, with perfect consistency, mustered in full force. The West Indian interest, which, though much reduced in wealth, still subsisted as a parliamentary entity, was keenly arrayed on the same side. There were some votes attracted by dislike, perhaps, to the argument on our side, which appeared to be complex and over-refined. A meeting of the party was held in order to confront the crisis. Sir Robert Peel stated his case in a speech which was thought to be haughty and unconciliatory. I do not recollect whether there was hostile discussion, or whether silence and the sulks prevailed. But I remember that when the meeting of the party broke up, Sir Robert Peel said on quitting the room that it was the worst meeting he had ever attended. It left disagreeable anticipations as to the division which was in immediate prospect. . . . The opposition in general had done what they could to strengthen their momentary association with the West Indian conservatives. Their hopes of a majority depended entirely upon conservative votes. Of course, therefore, it was vital to confine the attack to the merits of the question immediately before the House, as an attack upon the policy of the government generally could only strengthen it by awakening the susceptibilities of party and so reclaiming the stray voters to the administration. Lord Howick, entering into the debate as the hours of enhanced interest began, made a speech which attacked the conservative policy at large, and gave the opening for an effective reply. Lord Stanley perceived his opportunity and turned it to account with great force and adroitness. In a strictly retaliatory speech, he wound up conservative sentiment on behalf of ministers, and restored the tone of the House. The clouds of the earlier evening hours dispersed, and the government was victorious. Two speeches, one negatively and the other positively, reversed the prevailing current, and saved the administration. I have never known a parallel case. The whole honour of the fray, in the ministerial sense, redounded to Lord Stanley. I doubt whether in the twenty-six years of his after life he ever struck such a stroke as this.

COLONIAL POLICY

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You have reversed, within the last seventy years, every one of these salutary principles. Your policy has been this; you have retained at home the management of and property in colonial lands. You have magnificent sums figuring in your estimates for the ordinary expenses of their governments, instead of allowing them to bear their own expenses. Instead of suffering them to judge what are the measures best adapted to secure their peaceful relations with the aboriginal tribes, and endeavouring to secure their good conduct—instead of telling them that they

must not look for help from you unless they maintain the principles of justice, you tell them, 'You must not meddle with the relations between yourselves and the natives; that is a matter for parliament'; a minister sitting in Downing Street must determine how the local relations between the inhabitants of the colony and the aboriginal tribes are to be settled, in every point down to the minutest detail. Nay, even their strictly internal police your soldiery is often called upon to maintain. Then, again, the idea of their electing their own officers is, of course, revolutionary in the extreme—if not invading the royal supremacy, it is something almost as bad, dismembering the empire; and as to making their own laws upon their local affairs without interference or control from us, that is really an innovation so opposed to all ideas of imperial policy, that I think my honourable friend the member for Southwark (Sir William Molesworth) has been the first man in the House bold enough to propose it. Thus, in fact, the principles on which our colonial administration was once conducted have been precisely reversed. Our colonies have come to be looked upon as being, not municipalities endowed with internal freedom, but petty states. If you had only kept to the fundamental idea of your forefathers, that these were municipal bodies founded within the shadow and cincture of your imperial powers—that it was your business to impose on them such positive restraints as you thought necessary, and having done so, to leave them free in everything else—all those principles, instead of being reversed, would have survived in full vigour—you would have saved millions, I was going to say countless millions, to your exchequer; but you would have done something far more important by planting societies more worthy by far of the source from which they spring; for no man can read the history of the great American Revolution without seeing that a hundred years ago your colonies, such as they then were, with the institutions they then possessed, and the political relations in which they then stood to the mother-country, bred and reared men of mental stature and power such as far surpassed anything that colonial life is now commonly considered to be capable of producing.—*Speech on second reading of the New Zealand Constitution bill, May* 21, 1852.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS OF 1853 AS AFFECTING IRELAND

Vol. I. page 345.

When the Report of the Irish Financial Relations Commission of 1894 *was named to him, Mr. Gladstone made the following observations* :—

The changes adopted in that year were explained in my budget speech, and will be found in my volume of *Financial Statements*, pp. 53, 60, and 69. They affected the Spirit Duties and the Income-Tax.

1. *The Spirit Duties.*—We laid 8d. per gallon upon Irish spirits, imposed at the same time 1s. per gallon in Scotland, and laid it down that the equalisation of the duty in the three countries would require a reduction of the duty of 8s. chargeable in England. Sir Robert Peel had imposed 1s. per gallon on Irish spirits in 1842, but was defeated by the smuggler, and repealed the duty in consequence of the failure. In 1842 the duty was levied by a separate revenue police. I abolished this

separate police, and handed the duty to the constabulary force, which raised it, and without difficulty.

2. *The Income-Tax* was also in that year extended to Ireland. I pointed out that Sir Robert Peel, in imposing the burden on Great Britain, proposed to give a compensation for it by progressive reductions of duty on consumable commodities, and that Ireland had for twelve years enjoyed her full share of the compensation without undergoing any part of the burden; but I also laid it down as a fundamental principle that the peace income-tax was to be temporary, and I computed that it might cease in 1860. This computation was defeated, first by the Crimean war, second by a change of ideas as to expenditure and establishments which I did everything in my power to check, but which began to creep in with, and after, that war. We were enabled to hold it in check during the government of 1859-66. It has since that time, and especially in these last years, broken all bounds. But although the computation of 1853 was defeated, the principle that the income-tax should be temporary was never forgotten, at least by me, and in the year 1874 I redeemed my pledge by proposing, as mentioned, to repeal it —a course which would have saved the country a sum which it is difficult to reckon, but very large. This fact which was in the public mind in 1853 when the income-tax was temporary, is the key to the whole position. From this point of view we must combine it with the remission of the consolidated annuities. I have not now the means of making the calculation exactly, but it will be found that a descending income-tax on Ireland for seven years at 7d., then 6d., then 5d., is largely, though not completely, balanced by that remission. It will thus be seen that the finance of 1853 is not responsible either for a permanent peace income-tax upon Ireland, or for the present equalisation of the spirit duties. At the same time, I do not mean to condemn those measures. I condemn utterly the extravagance of the civil expenditure in Ireland, which, if Ireland has been unjustly taxed, cannot for a moment be pleaded as a compensation. I reserve my judgment whether political equality can be made compatible with privilege in point of taxation. I admit, for my own part, that in 1853 I never went back to the union whence the difficulty springs, but only to the union of the exchequers in or about 1817. It is impossible to resist the authority which has now affirmed that we owe a pecuniary, as well as a political debt to Ireland.

FINANCIAL PROPOSAL OF 1853

Vol. I. page 351.

Mr. Gladstone to Sir Stafford Northcote.

Aug. 6, 1862.—I have three main observations to make upon the conversion scheme, two of which are confessions, and one a maxim for an opposition to remember.

1. In the then doubtful state of foreign politics, had I been capable of fully appreciating it at the time, I ought not to have made the proposal.

2. Such a proposal when made by a government ought either to be resisted outright, or allowed to pass, I do not say without protest, but without delay. For *that* can do nothing but mischief to a proposal

depending on public impression. The same course should be taken as is taken in the case of loans.

3. I am sorry to say I made a more serious error, as regards the South Sea Stocks, than the original proposal. In the summer, I think, of 1853, and a good while before harvest the company proposed to me to take Mr. Goulburn's 3 per cents to an equal amount in lieu of their own. They were at the time more valuable and I refused; but it would have been wise to accept, not because the event proved it so, but because the state of things at the time was so far doubtful as to have made this kind of insurance prudent.

For the benefit of the expert, I give Mr. Gladstone's further observations on this highly technical matter:—

I have other remarks to offer. I write, however, from memory. Three millions of the £8,000,000 were paid in exchequer bills. The difference between £100 and the price of consols at the time may, in argument at least, fairly be considered as public loss. You say it was 90 or 91. We could not, however, if the operation had not taken place, have applied our surplus revenue with advantage to the reduction of debt. The balances would have been richer by £5,000,000, but we had to raise seven millions for the services of the year 1854-5. Now, as I am making myself liable for the loss of half a million of money in repaying the South Sea Company, and thereby starving the balances, I am entitled to say on the other hand that the real loss is to be measured by the amount of necessity created for replenishing them, and the charge entailed in effecting it. This I think was done by the exchequer bonds: and beyond all doubt a large saving was effected to the public by raising money upon those bonds, instead of borrowing in consols at 84 or thereabouts, which I think would have been the price for which we should in that year have borrowed—say, at 84. The redemption price, *i.e.* the price at which on the average consols have been in recent times redeemed, can hardly I think be less than 95, and may be higher. There was in 1854 a strong combination in the City to compel a 'loan' by bearing the funds; and when it was defeated by the vote of the House of Commons, a rapid reaction took place, several millions, as I understand, were lost by the 'bear,' and the attempt was not renewed in 1855, when the loan was, I believe, made on fair terms, relatively to the state of the market.

THE REFORM BILL OF 1854

Vol. I. page 365.

In cabinet on Wednesday Lord John Russell opened the question of the Reform bill, stated the prospect of defeat on Sir E. Dering's motion, and expressed his willingness to postpone the measure until the 27th April. Lord Palmerston recommended postponement altogether. Lord Aberdeen and Graham were averse to any postponement, the latter even declaring his opinion that we ought at the time when the Queen's Speech was framed to have assumed the present state of circumstances as inevitable, and that, therefore, we had no apology or ground for change; further, that we ought if necessary to dissolve upon defeat in order to carry the measure. No one else went this length. All the three I have named were, from their different points of view, disposed to concur in the expedient of postponement, which none of them preferred on its

merits. Of the rest of the cabinet, Molesworth and I expressed decidedly our preference for the more decided course of at once giving up the bill for the year, as did the chancellor, and this for the ultimate interest of the plan itself. Lord Lansdowne, Wood, Clarendon, Herbert were all, with more or less decision of phrase, in the same sense. Newcastle, Granville, and Argyll were, I believe, of the same mind. But all were willing to accept the postponement until April 27, rather than the very serious alternative. Molesworth and I both expressed our apprehension that this course would in the end subject the government to far more of censure and of suspicion than if we dealt with the difficulty at once. Next day Lord John came to see me, and told me he had the idea that in April it might probably be found advisable to divide the part of the bill which enfranchises new classes from that which disfranchises places and redistributes seats ; with a view of passing the first and letting the latter take its chance ; as the popular feeling would tell for the first while the selfish interests were provoked by the last. He thought that withdrawal of the bill was equivalent to defeat, and that either must lead to a summary winding up of the session. I said the division of the bill was a new idea and a new light to me ; but observed that it would by no means help Graham, who felt himself chiefly tied to the disfranchising part ; and submitted to him that his view of a withdrawal of the bill, given such circumstances as would alone induce the cabinet to think of it, was more unfavourable than the case warranted.—*March* 3, 1854.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

Vol. I. page 380

Extracts from a letter to Lord John Russell, Jan. 20, 1854

. . . I do not hesitate to say that one of the great recommendations of the change in my eyes would be its tendency to strengthen and multiply the ties between the higher classes and the possession of administrative power. As a member for Oxford, I look forward eagerly to its operation. There, happily, we are not without some lights of experience to throw upon this part of the subject. The objection which I always hear there from persons who wish to retain restrictions upon elections is this : 'If you leave them to examination, Eton, Harrow, Rugby, and the other public schools will carry *everything*.' I have a strong impression that the aristocracy of this country are even superior in natural gifts, on the average, to the mass : but it is plain that with their acquired advantages, their *insensible education*, irrespective of book-learning, they have an immense superiority. This applies in its degree to all those who may be called gentlemen by birth and training ; and it must be remembered that an essential part of any such plan as is now under discussion is the separation of *work*, wherever it can be made, into mechanical and intellectual, a separation which will open to the higher educated class a career, and give them a command over all the higher parts of the civil service, which up to this time they have never enjoyed. . . .

I must admit that the aggregate means now possessed by government for carrying on business in the House of Commons are not in excess of the real need, and will not bear serious diminution. I remember being alarmed as a young man when Lord Althorp said, or was said to have said, that this country could no longer be governed by patronage. But

while sitting thirteen years for a borough with a humble constituency, and spending near ten of them in opposition, I was struck by finding that the loss or gain of access to government patronage was not traceable in its effect upon the local political influences. I concluded from this that it was not the intrinsic value of patronage (which is really none, inasmuch as it does not, or ought not, to multiply the aggregate number of places to be given, but only acts on the mode of giving them) that was regarded, but simply that each party liked and claimed to be upon a footing of equality with their neighbours. Just in the same way, it was considered necessary that bandsmen, flagmen, and the rest, should be paid four times the value of their services, without any intention of bribery, but because it was the custom, and was done on the other side—in places where this was thought essential, it has now utterly vanished away, and yet the people vote and work for their cause as zealously as they did before. May not this after all be found to be the case in the House of Commons as well as in many constituencies? . . .

It might increase the uncertainties of the government in the House of Commons on particular nights: but is not the hold even now uncertain as compared with what it was thirty or forty years ago; and is it really weaker for general and for good purposes, on account of that uncertainty, than it then was? I have heard you explain with great force to the House this change in the position of governments since the Reform bill, as a legitimate accompaniment of changes in our political state, by virtue of which we appeal *more* to reason, less to habit, direct interest or force. May not this be another legitimate and measured step in the same direction? May we not get, I will not say more ease and certainty for the leader of the House, but more real and more honourable strength with the better and, in the long run, the ruling part of the community, by a signal proof of cordial desire that the processes by which government is carried on should not in elections only, but elsewhere too be honourable and pure? I speak with diffidence; but remembering that at the revolution we passed over from prerogative to patronage, and that since the revolution we have also passed from bribery to influence, I cannot think the process is to end here; and after all we have seen of the good sense and good feeling of the community, though it may be too sanguine, I cherish the hope that the day is now near at hand, or actually come, when in pursuit not of visionary notions, but of a great practical and economical improvement, we may safely give yet one more new and striking sign of rational confidence in the intelligence and character of the people. . . .

MR. GLADSTONE AND THE BANK

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From the time I took office as chancellor of the exchequer I began to learn that the state held in the face of the Bank and the City an essentially false position as to finance. When those relations began, the state was justly in ill odour as a fraudulent bankrupt who was ready on occasion to add force to fraud. After the revolution it adopted better methods though often for unwise purposes, and in order to induce monied men to be lenders it came forward under the countenance of the Bank as its sponsor. Hence a position of subserviency which, as the idea of public faith grew up and gradually attained to solidity, it became the interest

of the Bank and the City to prolong. This was done by amicable and accommodating measures towards the government, whose position was thus cushioned and made easy in order that it might be willing to give it a continued acquiescence. The hinge of the whole situation was this: the government itself was not to be a substantive power in matters of finance, but was to leave the money power supreme and unquestioned. In the conditions of that situation I was reluctant to acquiesce, and I began to fight against it by financial self-assertion from the first, though it was only by the establishment of the Post Office Savings Banks and their great progressive development that the finance minister has been provided with an instrument sufficiently powerful to make him independent of the Bank and the City power when he has occasion for sums in seven figures. I was tenaciously opposed by the governor and deputy-governor of the Bank, who had seats in parliament, and I had the City for an antagonist on almost every occasion.—*Undated fragment.*

THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE AND SIDNEY HERBERT

Vol. I. page 388

With reference to the Crimean war, I may give a curious example of the power of self-deception in the most upright men. The offices of colonial secretary and war minister were, in conformity with usage, united in the hands of the Duke of Newcastle. On the outbreak of war it became necessary to separate them. It evidently lay with the holder to choose which he would keep. The duke elected for the war department, and publicly declared that he did this in compliance with the unanimous desire of his colleagues. And no one contradicted him. We could only 'grin and bear it.' I cannot pretend to know the sentiments of each and every minister on the matter. But I myself, and every one with whom I happened to communicate, were very strongly of an opposite opinion. The duke was *well* qualified for the colonial seals, for he was a statesman; *ill* for the war office, as he was no administrator. I believe we all desired that Lord Palmerston should have been war minister. It might have made a difference as to the tolerance of the feeble and incapable administration of our army before Sebastopol. Indeed, I remember hearing Lord Palmerston suggest in cabinet the recall of Sir Richard Airy.

In that crisis one man suffered most unjustly. I mean Sidney Herbert. To some extent, perhaps, his extraordinary and most just popularity led people to refrain from pouring on him those vials of wrath to which his office exposed him in the eyes especially of the uninformed. The duties of his department were really financial. I suppose it to be doubtful whether it was not the duty of the secretary of state's department to deal with the question of supply for the army, leaving to him only the management of the purchasing part. But I conceive it could be subject to no doubt at all that it was the duty of the administrative department of the army on the spot to anticipate and make known their wants for the coming winter. This, if my memory serves me, they wholly failed to do: and, the Duke of Newcastle's staff being in truth very little competent, Herbert strained himself morning, noon, and night to invent wants for the army, and according to his best judgment or conjecture to supply them. So was

laden the great steamer which went to the bottom in the harbour of Balaclava. And so came Herbert to be abused for his good deeds.—*Autobiographic Note*, Sept. 17, 1897.

THE CRIMEAN WAR

Vol. I. page 406

Mr. Gladstone to Duke of Argyll

Oct. 18, '55.—You have conferred a great obligation on me by putting me into the witness-box, and asking me why I thought last year that we were under an obligation to Lord Palmerston for 'concentrating the attention of the cabinet on the expedition to the Crimea.' Such was *then* my feeling, entertained so strongly that I even wrote to him for the purpose of giving to it the most direct expression. And such is my feeling *still*. I think the fall of Sebastopol, viewed in itself and apart from the mode in which it has been brought about, a great benefit to Europe. . . . This benefit I should have contemplated with high and, so to speak, unmixed satisfaction, were I well assured as to the means by which we had achieved it. But, of course, there is a great difference between a war which I felt, however grievous it was, yet to be just and needful, and a war carried on without any adequate justification; so far as I can to this hour tell, without even any well-defined practical object. . . . Your letter (if I must now pass from the defensive) seems to me to involve assumptions as to our right to rectify the distribution of political power by bloodshed, which carry it far beyond just bounds. In the hour of success doctrines and policy are applauded, or pass unquestioned even under misgiving, which are very differently handled at a period of disaster, or when a nation comes to feel the embarrassments it has accumulated. The government are certainly giving effect to the public opinion of the day. If that be a justification, they have it: as all governments of England have had, in all wars, at eighteen months from their commencement. Apart from the commanding consideration of our duty as men and Christians, I am not less an objector to the post-April-policy, on the ground of its certain or probable consequences—in respect first and foremost to Turkey; in respect to the proper place and power of France; in respect to the interest which Europe has in keeping her (and us all) within such place and power; in respect to the permanence of our friendly relations with her; and lastly, in respect to the effects of continued war upon the condition of our own people, and the stability of our institutions. But each of these requires an octavo volume. I must add another head: I view with alarm the future use against England of the arguments and accusations we use against Russia.

Dec. 1.—What I find press hardest among the reproaches upon me is this:—'You went to war for limited objects; why did you not take into account the high probability that those objects would be lost sight of in the excitement which war engenders, and that this war, if once begun, would receive an extension far beyond your views and wishes.'

Dec. 3.—I *do* mean that the reproach I named is the one most nearly just. What the weight due to it is, I forbear finally to judge until I see the conclusion of this tremendous drama. But I quite see enough to be aware that the particular hazard in question ought to have been

more sensibly and clearly before me. It *may* be good logic and good sense, I think, to say:—'I will forego ends that are just, for fear of being driven upon the pursuit of others that are not so.' Whether it *is* so in a particular case depends very much upon the probable amount of the driving power and of the resisting force which may be at our command.

BUDGET OF 1860

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Sir William Heathcote wrote to Mr. Gladstone, May 4, 1861:—

I understood you in your rebukes of Lewis in 1857, to be aiming not only at a change of his plan of finance in that particular year, but (if that were impossible, or at least could not be carried), at a resumption as early as circumstances would allow, of what you thought the proper line of action which he insisted on suspending. Income-tax and war duties on tea and sugar were and would continue to be, as I understood, the primary claimants for reduction of taxation, in your judgment. . . . The very vehemence of your convictions and expressions on *both* occasions perplexes me.

Mr. Gladstone replied the same day:—

. . . You think, 1. That I bound myself to the reduction of the tea and sugar duties as a policy for future occasions, and not merely for the issue then raised. 2. That in like manner I was bound to the reduction and abolition of the income-tax. 3. That even if there arose in the system of our expenditure a great change, involving an increase of ten or fifteen millions of money over 1853, I was still in consistency bound to hold over the first chance of reduction for income-tax, tea and sugar. 4. That consequently until these duties were remitted I could not propose to prosecute any commercial reforms involving, as nearly all of them do, a sacrifice of revenue for a time. 5. It is because I have departed from these positions by proposing a multitude of reductions and abolitions of duty, other than the three mentioned, and partly or wholly in preference to them, that you have lost confidence in my judgment on these matters (a confidence to which I do not pretend that I had ever any claim).

If I have interpreted you aright, and I hope you will tell me whether I have done so or not, this is all to me exceedingly curious; such are the differences in the opinions of men formed from their different points of view. Now I will give you mine. To give effect to the pledge of honour, by which I became bound in 1853, I made a desperate effort in 1857, with all the zeal of which I was capable, and with all the passion to which I am liable. It was my opinion that the course then taken would be decisive as to the operations in 1860, for the income-tax never can be got rid of except by prospective finance, reaching over several years, and liable to impediment and disturbance accordingly. I therefore protested against the whole scale of expenditure then proposed; as well as against particular kinds of expenditure to which I might refer. I likewise protested against the provision for that expenditure which the government of the day proposed. First, because the expenditure itself was excessive, in my view. Secondly, because in the mode of that provision I thought the remission of income-tax was large out of all propor-

tion to the remission on indirect taxes; and this disproportion I regarded as highly dangerous. I determined to let no political prejudice stand in my way, and to test to the best of my very feeble power the opinion of parliament with respect to tea and sugar. I stated that if the opinion of parliament were against me I should not factiously prolong the contest but should withdraw from it. Not only was the opinion of parliament against me, but it so happened that the opinion of the country was immediately afterwards taken by a dissolution on that and on other kindred questions. The country affirmed the policy of Lord Palmerston; and the policy of a materially increased expenditure, by an overwhelming majority. I had misjudged public opinion; they had read it aright. After the dissolution of 1857, Sir George Lewis who had previously raised the tea and sugar duties for one year, proposed to raise them for two more. I immediately followed in debate, and thanked him warmly for doing it. All this of course I can prove. I said, we are going to have more expenditure, we must therefore have more taxation.

As I have gone thus far with my history, I will conclude it. Notwithstanding what had happened, I did not absolutely abandon at that time the hope that we might still reach in 1860 a state which might enable us to abolish the income-tax. I had a faint expectation of more economy under another government. When Lord Derby's administration came in in 1858, they professed to reduce expenditure by £800,000, and to contemplate further reductions. I expressed my satisfaction, and gave them the extreme of support that I could. But I then clearly pointed out that, even with the scale of expenditure they then proposed, we could not abolish the income-tax in 1860. In a few months, their reductions vanished into air. In 1859 came the famous 'reconstruction.' I took office in June, and found a scale of expenditure going on in the treasury far more prodigal and wanton than I had ever charged upon Lord Palmerston's first government. I found also that when the estimates had been completed, I believe entirely on *their* basis, there was a probable deficiency of four or five millions for a year of which nearly one-third had passed. And the expenditure was I think nearly seventy millions, or some fourteen millions more than in 1853. This was not the act only of the government. The opposition halloed them on; and the country, seized with a peculiar panic, was in a humour even more lavish than the opposition.

My view was, and I stated it, that we ought to provide for this expenditure in a due proportion between direct and indirect taxes. I showed that this proportion had not been observed: that we had continued to levy large amounts of war tax on tea and sugar, and had returned to the scale of 1853 for income. I proposed to provide the necessary sums chiefly by an increase of income-tax. But neither then (in July 1859), nor for nearly two and a half years before, had I ever (to my knowledge) presumed to speak of any one as bound to abolish the income-tax or to remit the additional duties on tea and sugar.

I fully expect from *you* the admission that as to these measures I could not in the altered circumstances be bound absolutely to the remissions. But you say I was bound to give them a preference over all other remissions. Nowhere I believe can one word to this effect be extracted from any speech of mine. I found in 1860 that all the reforming legislation, which had achieved such vast results, had been suspended for seven years. We were then raising by duties doomed in 1853,

from twelve to thirteen millions. It would in my opinion have been no less than monstrous on my part to recognise the preferences you claim for these particular duties. All of them indeed would have been reliefs, even the income-tax which is I think proved to be the least relief of any. But, though reliefs, they were hardly reforms ; and experience had shown us that reforms were in fact double and treble reliefs. I may be wrong, but it is my opinion and I found it on experience, that the prospect of the removal of the three collectively (income, tea extra, and sugar extra) being in any case very remote, it is less remote with than without the reforming measures of the last and (I hope I may add) of the present year. Had the expenditure of 1853 been resumed, there would notwithstanding the Russian war have been, in my opinion, room for all these three things. 1. Abolition of income-tax by or near 1860 ; 2. remission of increases on tea and sugar within the same time ; 3. the prosecution of the commercial reforms.

It may be said that having set my face against an excess of expenditure I ought to have considered that a holy war, and not to have receded. Although I place public economy somewhat higher as a matter of duty than many might do, I do not think it would have been right, I do think it would have been foolish and presumptuous in me to have gone beyond these two things : first, making an effort to the utmost of my power at the critical moment (as I took it to be), and secondly, on being defeated to watch for opportunities thereafter. Since it should be remembered I do not recommend or desire sweeping and sudden reductions.

The chief errors that I see myself to have committed are these. In 1853 when I took the unusual course of estimating our income for seven years, and assuming that our expenditure would either continue as it was, or only move onwards gradually and gently, I ought no doubt to have pointed out explicitly, that a great disturbance and increase of our expenditure would baffle my reckonings. Again in 1857 the temper of the public mind had undergone a change which I failed to discern ; and I attacked the government and the chancellor of the exchequer of that day for doing what the country desired though I did not. I name these as specific errors, over and above the general one of excess of heat.

The budget of last year I cannot admit to have been an error. People say it should have been smaller. My belief is that if it had been a smaller boat it would not have lived in such a sea. I speak of the period of the session before the China war became certain. When it did so, we were in a great strait about the paper duty. We felt the obligation incurred by the vote on the second reading, and we construed it according to the established usage. We took the more arduous, but I think the more honourable course for a government to pursue. Had we abandoned the bill, I know not how we could have looked in the face those who had acted and invested on the faith of an unbroken practice. I admit that political motives greatly concurred to recommend the budget of last year. It was a budget of peace, and peace wanted it. The budget of this year followed from the budget of last, given the other circumstances. At the same time I can understand how the claim of tea could be set up, but not well after the occurrences of last year how it could be supported.

This is a long egotistical story. But when you consider that it contains my whole story (except *pièces justificatives*) in answer to so many speeches in both Houses and elsewhere, for never to this hour have I

opened my lips in personal defence, you will understand why I might be garrulous.

Notwithstanding the mild doctrine I have held about expenditure I admit it may be said I ought not to have joined a government which had such extended views in that direction, even though they were the views of the nation. Much may be said on this. I may, however, remark that when the government was formed I did not fully conceive the extent to which we should proceed.

THE CABINET. 1860

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Mr. Gladstone's memorandum on the currents of opinion in the cabinet of 1860 *concludes as follows* :—

1. The most Italian members of the cabinet have been: Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, W. E. G., Gibson, Argyll. The least Italian: Lewis, Wood, Grey, Herbert, Villiers (especially).
2. In foreign policy generally the most combative have been: Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Duke of Newcastle, the chancellor. The least combative: Duke of Somerset, Duke of Argyll, Granville, Gibson, Herbert, Lewis, Grey, W. E. G., Wood, the same in feeling but not active.
3. In defences and expenditure, the most alarmed or most martial (as the case may be), have been: Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Duke of Newcastle, S. Herbert, followed by Duke of Somerset, the chancellor, Granville, Cardwell. Inclined the other way: Gibson, W. E. G., Lewis, Grey, Duke of Argyll (Elgin, I think).
4. In finance some are for movement, some stationary or retrograde so as to be ready for immediate war. Yet here we are not divided simply as combative or anti-combative. The onward men in finance are: Lord John Russell, Duke of Newcastle, Granville, Argyll, Gibson, W. E. G., and, I think, the chancellor. The stationary men are, first and foremost: Sir George Lewis, Sir C. Wood; next to these, Lord Palmerston, Cardwell, and, I think, Villiers, Herbert.
5. On reform I must distinguish between (*a*) extension of the franchise and (*b*) redistribution of seats. In the first the more liberal men are: Lord John Russell, Duke of Somerset, Duke of Newcastle, Duke of Argyll, Gibson, W. E. G. The fearful or opposed are: Lord Palmerston, C. Villiers, S. Herbert. In the second, for small disfranchisement were, I think, all the first except Newcastle. For larger disfranchisement: Newcastle, Villiers, and Lord Palmerston, I think not greatly averse. In fact, I think, that larger disfranchisement of places may have been favoured by him, 1. as a substitute for enlargement of the franchise, which he chiefly dreads; 2. as perhaps an obstacle to the framing of a measure.
6. In church matters Herbert, Newcastle, and I, are the most conservative and the most church-like; with a sympathy from Argyll. But, as I said, there is no struggle here: patronage, the sore subject, not being a cabinet affair.

SESSION OF 1860

Vol. I. page 509

Extract from a Letter to the Duke of Argyll

Penmaen., September 3, 1860.—The session has been one to make all of us thoughtful, and me perhaps most of all. It is indeed much before my mind, but my head has not ceased to whirl, so that I cannot get a clear view of what Seward would call my position. Two things I know, one is that it produced the greatest pleasures and the greatest pains I have ever known in politics; the other that I have had to take various decisions and perform acts that could neither be satisfactory to others, nor from the doubt attaching to one side or the other of the alternative, even to myself. To have been the occasion of the blow to the House of Commons, or as I call it the 'gigantic innovation,' will be a grief to me as long as I live; if by wildness and rashness I have been its cause, it will be a much greater grief. Of that I am not yet able to judge. On the whole when I think of the cabinet, I always go back to Jacob and Esau fighting in their mother's womb; only here there have been many Jacobs and Esaus, by which I do not mean the sixteen members of the cabinet, but the many and very unhandy causes of division. Perhaps I should find it easiest in the work of confession to own my neighbour's faults, *i.e.* to dwell upon those strange sins of foreign policy which have happily for the most part been nipped in the bud almost *à l'unanimité* (yet with what exceptions!); but avoiding that task, I will make my own confession. I cannot justify the finance of the year as a whole. . . . As to the amount of the final demand [for the China war], what it really demonstrates is *one* among the follies and dangers of our high-handed policy, our want of control over proceedings at the other end of the world. But the weak point is the fortification plan; I do not now speak of its own merits or demerits, but I speak of it in relation to the budget. . . . It is a vile precedent to give away money by remission, and borrow to supply the void; and in the full and *chief* responsibility for having established this precedent I am involved, not by the budget of February but by the consent of July to the scheme which involved the borrowing. No doubt there are palliating circumstances; and lastly the grievous difficulty of choice between mischievous [*illegible*] and mischievous resignation. Still I must say, it is in retrospect, as the people and parliament have a right to judge it, a bad and unworkmanlike business, and under a skilful analysis of it in the House of Commons (which there is no one opposite fit to make, except it be Northcote who perhaps scruples it) I should wince. All these things and others more inward than these, make sore places in the mind; but on the other hand, that I may close with a gleam of sunshine like that which is now casting its shadow on my paper from Penmaenmawr after a rough morning, I am thankful in the highest degree to have had a share in resisting the alarming mania of the day by means of the French treaty, to which, if we escape collision, I think the escape will have been mainly due; and likewise in one at least negative service to the great Italian cause, which is not Italian merely but European.

MR. PITT'S WAR FINANCE

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Mr. Gladstone to Herbert Gladstone

March 10, 1876.—Mr. Pitt's position in the Revolutionary war was, I think, a false one. To keep out of that war demanded from the people of this country an extraordinary degree of self-control, and this degree of it they did not possess. The consequence of our going into it was to give an intensity and vitality to the struggle, which but for the tenacity of English character it would not have possessed. Mr. Pitt did not show the great genius in war which he possessed as a peace minister. Until the epoch of the Peninsula our military performances were small and poor, and the method of subsidy was unsatisfactory and ineffective. The effect of borrowing money in three per cents was to load us with a very heavy capital of national debt. I think at one time we only got £46, or some such amount, for the £100. It must, however, be taken into view that a perpetual annuity of £3, redeemable upon paying £100, brought *more* than ¾ of what a perpetual annuity of £4, similarly redeemable, would have brought; or than ¾ of what a £5 annuity, similarly redeemable, would have brought. It is not easy to strike the balance. Mr. Newmarch, a living economist of some authority, I believe, thinks Mr. Pitt was right. I do not think the case is so clear against him as to *detract* from his great reputation. But were I in the unhappy position of having to call for a large loan, I should be disposed to ask for the tender in more than one form, *e.g.*, to ask for a tender in three per cents pure and simple, and an alternative in 4 or 5 per cents, with that rate of interest guaranteed for a certain number of years. Sir Robert Walpole had not to contend with like difficulties, and I think his administration should be compared with the *early years* of Pitt's, in which way of judging he would come off second, though a man of cool and sagacious judgment, while morally he stood low.

FRENCH COMMERCIAL TREATY. 1860

Vol. I. page 523

Mr. Gladstone at Leeds, October 8, 1881:—

I, for my part, look with the deepest interest upon the share that I had in concluding—I will not say so much in concluding, but in conducting on this side of the water, and within the walls of parliament as well as in administration—the proceedings which led to the memorable French treaty of 1860. It is quite true that that treaty did not produce the whole of the benefits that some too sanguine anticipations may possibly have expected from it, that it did not produce a universal smash of protective duties, as I wish it had, throughout the civilised world. But it did something. It enormously increased the trade between this country and France. It effectually checked and traversed in the year 1860 tendencies of a very different kind towards needless alarms and panics, and tendencies towards convulsions and confusion in Europe. There was no more powerful instrument for confining and controlling those wayward and angry spirits at that particular crisis, than the commercial treaty with France. It produced no inconsiderable effect

for a number of years upon the legislation of various European countries, which tended less decisively than we could have desired, but still intelligibly and beneficially in the direction of freedom of trade.

LORD ABERDEEN

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Mr. Gladstone to Sir Arthur Gordon (Lord Stanmore)

Downing Street, April 21, 1861.—MY DEAR ARTHUR,—When, within a few days after your father's death, I referred in conversation with you to one or two points in his character, it was from the impulse of the moment, and without any idea of making my words matter of record. Months have now passed since you asked me to put on paper the substance of what I said. The delay has been partly, perhaps mainly, owing to the pressure of other demands upon my time and thoughts. But it has also been due to this, that an instinct similar to that which made me speak, has made me shrink from writing. It is enough in conversation to give the most partial and hasty touches, provided they be not in the main untrue. Those same touches when clothed in a form of greater assumption have but a meagre and unsatisfactory appearance, and may do even positive injustice. Most of all in the case of a character which was not only of rare quality, but which was so remarkable for the fineness of its lights and shadows. But you have a right to my recollections such as they are, and I will not withhold them.

I may first refer to the earliest occasion on which I saw him; for it illustrates a point not unimportant in his history. On an evening in the month of January 1835, during what is called the short government of Sir Robert Peel, I was sent for by Sir Robert Peel, and received from him the offer, which I accepted, of the under-secretaryship of the colonies. From him I went on to your father, who was then secretary of state in that department, and who was thus to be, in official home-talk, my master. Without any apprehension of hurting you, I may confess, that I went in fear and trembling. [*Then follows the passage already quoted in vol. i. p.* 92.] I was only, I think, for about ten weeks his under-secretary. But as some men hate those whom they have injured, so others love those whom they have obliged; and his friendship continued warm and unintermitting for the subsequent twenty-six years of his life.

Some of his many great qualities adorned him in common with several, or even with many, other contemporary statesmen: such as clearness of view, strength of the deliberative faculty, strong sense of duty, deep devotion to the crown, and the most thorough and uncompromising loyalty to his friends and colleagues. In this loyalty of intention many, I think, are not only praiseworthy but perfect. But the loyalty of intention was in him so assisted by other and distinctive qualities, as to give it a peculiar efficacy; and any one associated with Lord Aberdeen might always rest assured that he was safe in his hands. When our law did not allow prisoners the benefit of counsel, it was commonly said that the judge was counsel for the prisoner. Lord Aberdeen was always counsel for the absent. Doubtless he had pondered much upon the law, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' It had entered profoundly into his being, and formed a large part of it. He was strong in his self-respect, but his respect for others, not for this man or that but for other

men as men, was much more conspicuous. Rarely indeed have I heard him utter a word censuring opponents, or concerning those who actually were or had been friends, that could have given pain. If and when it was done, it was done so to speak judicially, upon full and reluctant conviction and with visible regret.

If I have said that he had much in common with other distinguished men who were like him statesmen by profession, it has been by way of preface to what I have now to say; namely, that what has ever struck me in his character as a whole, was its distinctiveness. There were several mental virtues that he possessed in a degree very peculiar; there were, I think, one or two in which he stood almost alone. I am not in myself well qualified for handling a subject like this, and also my life has been too hurried to give me the most favourable opportunities. Still I must try to explain my meaning. I will name then the following characteristics, one and all of which were more prominent in him than in any public man I ever knew: mental calmness; the absence (if for want of better words I may describe it by a negative) of all egoism; the love of exact justice; a thorough tolerance of spirit; and last and most of all an entire absence of suspicion.

There was something very remarkable in the combination of these qualities, as well as in their separate possession. Most men who might be happy enough to have one half his love of justice, would be so tossed with storms of indignation at injustice as to lose the balance of their judgment. But he had or seemed to have all the benefits, all the ennobling force of strong emotion, with a complete exemption from its dangers. His mind seemed to move in an atmosphere of chartered tranquillity, which allowed him the view of every object, however blinding to others, in its true position and proportion.

It has always appeared to me that the love of justice is one of the rarest among all good qualities, I mean the love of it with full and commanding strength. I should almost dare to say there are five generous men to one just man. The beauty of justice is the beauty of simple form; the beauty of generosity is heightened with colour and every accessory. The passions will often ally themselves with generosity, but they always tend to divert from justice. The man who strongly loves justice must love it for its own sake, and such a love makes of itself a character of a simple grandeur to which it is hard to find an equal.

Next to Lord Aberdeen, I think Sir Robert Peel was the most just of the just men I have had the happiness to know. During the years from 1841 to 1846, when they were respectively foreign secretary and prime minister, as I was at the board of trade for much of the time, I had occasion to watch the two in the conduct of several negotiations that involved commercial interests, such as that on the Stade Dues and that on the project of a commercial treaty with Portugal. Now and then Sir Robert Peel would show some degree of unconscious regard to the mere flesh and blood, if I may so speak, of Englishmen; Lord Aberdeen was invariably for putting the most liberal construction upon both the conduct and the claims of the other negotiating state.

There is perhaps no position in this country, in which the love of justice that I have ascribed in such extraordinary measure to your father, can be so severely tested, as that very position of foreign minister, with which his name is so closely associated. Nowhere is a man so

constantly and in such myriad forms tempted to partiality; nowhere can he do more for justice; but nowhere is it more clear that all human force is inadequate for its end. A nation is rarely just to other nations. Perhaps it is never truly just, though sometimes (like individuals) what may be called more than just. There can be no difficulty in any country, least of all this, in finding foreign ministers able and willing to assert the fair and reasonable claims of their countrymen with courage and with firmness. The difficulty is quite of another kind; it is to find the foreign minister, first, who will himself view those claims in the dry light both of reason and of prudence; secondly, and a far harder task, who will have the courage to hazard, and if need be to sacrifice himself in keeping the mind of his countrymen down to such claims as are strictly fair and reasonable. Lord Aberdeen was most happy in being secretary of state for foreign affairs in the time and in the political company of two such men as the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. He was also happy in the general prevalence of a spirit of great sobriety in the country, which was singularly free under the government of Sir Robert Peel, from the opposite but sometimes associated extremes of wantonness and fear. I am glad to think that his administration of his department earned a decided public approval. So just a man will, I think, rarely attain in that department to the same measure of popularity, while a less just man might easily obtain one far greater.

To fall short of perfect candour would deprive all I have said of the little value it can possess, as that little value is all summed up in its sincerity. On one subject to which my mind has been directed for the last twelve or fourteen years, I had the misfortune to differ from your father. I mean the state of Italy and its relation to Austria in particular. I will not pretend to say that his view of the case of Italy appeared to me to harmonize with his general mode of estimating human action and political affairs. It seemed to me as if, called in early youth to deal with a particular combination of questions which were truly gigantic, his mind had received from their weight and force at an impressible period, a fixed form in relation to them, while it ever remained open and elastic in a peculiar degree upon all others. But my mode of solution for what appeared to me an anomaly is immaterial. I thankfully record that the Italian question was almost the only one within my recollection, quite the only one of practical importance, on which during the twenty-six years I have named, I was unable to accept his judgment. I bear witness with yet greater pleasure that, when I returned from Naples in 1851 deeply impressed with the horrible system that I had witnessed, his opinions on Italian politics did not prevent his readily undertaking to read the statement I had drawn, nor his using, when he had read it, more strong words on the subject, which came from lips like his with such peculiar force. As readily did he undertake to invoke the aid of the court of Vienna; to which, if I remember right, he transmitted the statement in manuscript.

Though I feel that I cannot by any effort do justice to what I have termed his finely-shaded character, I also feel that I might be drawn onwards to great length on the subject. I must resist the impulse, but I cannot stop without saying a word on the quality which I regard as beyond all others his own, I mean the absence from his nature of all tendency to suspicion. Those who have read his state papers, and have admired their penetrating force and comprehensive scope, will not

misunderstand me when I say that he was, in this respect, a little child; not from defect of vision, but from thorough nobleness of nature.

I do not think it was by effort and self-command that he rid himself of suspicion. In the simple and strong aim of the man to be good himself, it belonged to the very strength and simplicity of that aim, that he should also think others good. I recollect, and I dare say you better recollect, one of his sayings: 'I have a habit of believing people.' To some these words may not seem to import a peculiarity. But as descriptive of him they indicate what of all the points of his character seemed to me most peculiar. I have known one man as free from suspicions as was Lord Aberdeen, but he was not a politician. I am far from thinking statesmen, or politicians, less honourable than other men, quite the reverse; but the habit of their life renders them suspicious. The vicissitudes of politics, the changes of position, the changes of alliance, the sharp transitions from co-operation to antagonism, the inevitable contact with revolting displays of self-seeking and self-love; more than all these perhaps, the constant habit of forecasting the future and shaping all its contingencies before-hand, which is eminently the merit and intellectual virtue of the politician, all these tend to make him, and commonly do make him, suspicious even of his best friend. This suspicion may be found to exist in conjunction with regard, with esteem, nay with affection. For it must be recollected that it is not usually a suspicion of moral delinquency, but at least as it dwells in the better and higher natures, of intellectual error only, in some of its numerous forms, or at most of speaking with a reserve that may be more or less or even wholly unconscious. None of these explanations are needed for Lord Aberdeen. He always took words in their direct and simple meaning, and assumed them to be the index of the mind; and its full index too, so that he did not speculate to learn what undiscovered residue might still remain in its dark places. This entire immunity from suspicion, which makes our minds in general like a haunted place, and the sense of the immunity that he conveyed to his friends in all his dealings with them, combined with the deep serenity of his mind, which ever seemed to beguile and allay by some kindly process of nature excitement in others, gave an indescribable charm to all intercourse with him in critical and difficult circumstances. Hence perhaps in great part, and not merely from his intellectual gifts, was derived the remarkable power he seemed to me to exercise in winning confidences without seeking to win them; and, on the whole, I believe that this quality, could we hold it as it was held in him, would save us from ten erroneous judgments for one into which it might lead. For the grand characteristic of suspicion after all, as of superstition, is to see things that are not.

I turn now to another point: Lord Aberdeen was not demonstrative; I do not suppose he could have been an actor; he was unstudied in speech; and it is of interest to inquire what it was that gave such extraordinary force and impressiveness to his language. He did not deal in antithesis. His sayings were not sharpened with gall. In short, one might go on disclaiming for him all the accessories to which most men who are impressive owe their impressiveness. Yet I never knew any one who was so impressive in brief utterances conveying the sum of the matter. . . .

History has also caught and will hold firmly and well the honoured

name of your father. There was no tarnish upon his reputation more than upon his character. He will be remembered in connection with great passages of European policy not only as a man of singularly searching, large, and calm intelligence, but yet more as the just man, the man that used only true weights and measures, and ever held even the balance of his ordered mind. It is no reproach to other statesmen of this or other periods, to say that scarcely any of them have had a celebrity so entirely unaided by a transitory glare. But if this be so, it implies that while they for the most part must relatively lose, he must relatively and greatly gain. If they have had stage-lights and he has had none, it is the hour when those lights are extinguished that will for the first time do that justice as between them which he was too noble, too far aloft in the tone of his mind, to desire to anticipate. All the qualities and parts in which he was great were those that are the very foundation-stones of our being; as foundation-stones they are deep, and as being deep they are withdrawn from view; but time is their witness and their friend, and in the final distribution of posthumous fame Lord Aberdeen has nothing to forfeit, he has only to receive.

I see on perusing what I have written, that in the endeavour to set forth the virtues and great qualities of your father, I seem more or less to disparage other men, including even Sir Robert Peel whom he so much esteemed and loved. I had no such intention, and it is the fault of my hand, not of my will. He would not have claimed, he would not have wished nor borne, that others should claim for him superiority, or even parity in all points with all his contemporaries. But there was a certain region of character which was, so to speak, all his own; and there other men do seem more or less dwarfed beside him. In the combination of profound feeling with a calm of mind equally profound, of thorough penetration with the largest charity, of the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove, in the total suppression and exclusion of self from his reckonings and actions—in all this we may think him supreme, and yet have a broad array of good and noble qualities in which he may have shared variously with others. There are other secrets of his character and inner life into which I do not pretend to have penetrated. It always seemed to me that there was a treasure-house within him, which he kept closed against the eyes of men. He is gone. He has done well in his generation. May peace and light be with him, and may honour and blessing long attend his memory upon earth.—Believe me, my dear Arthur, affectionately yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

CABINET OF 1868-1874

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First lord of the treasury	W. E. Gladstone.
Lord chancellor	Lord Hatherley (Page Wood).
President of the council	Earl de Grey (created Marquis of Ripon 1871).
Lord privy seal	Earl of Kimberley.
Chancellor of the exchequer	Robert Lowe.
Home secretary	Henry Austin Bruce.
Foreign secretary	Earl of Clarendon.
Colonial secretary	Earl Granville.

War secretary	Edward Cardwell.
First lord of the admiralty	H. C. E. Childers.
Indian secretary	Duke of Argyll.
President of the board of trade	John Bright.
Chief secretary for Ireland	Chichester Fortescue.
Postmaster general	Marquis of Hartington.
President of the poor law board	George J. Goschen.

On Lord Clarendon's death in June 1870, Lord Granville became foreign secretary; Lord Kimberley, colonial secretary; Viscount Halifax (Sir C. Wood), lord privy seal; and Mr. Forster, vice-president of the privy council, entered the cabinet.

On Mr. Bright's resignation in December 1870, Mr. Chichester Fortescue became president of the board of trade; Lord Hartington succeeded him as chief secretary for Ireland; Mr. Monsell was appointed postmaster general without a seat in the cabinet.

On Mr. Childers's resignation in March 1871, Mr. Goschen became first lord of the admiralty, and Mr. James Stansfeld president of the poor law board.

In August 1872 Mr. Childers rejoined the cabinet, succeeding Lord Dufferin as chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster. In October Sir Roundell Palmer (created Lord Selborne) became lord chancellor on the retirement of Lord Hatherley.

In August 1873 Lord Ripon and Mr. Childers retired, Mr. Gladstone became chancellor of the exchequer as well as first lord; Mr. Bright rejoined the cabinet as chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster; Mr. Lowe became home secretary and Mr. Bruce (created Lord Aberdare) president of the council.

IRISH CHURCH BILL

Vol. I. page 681

Mr. Gladstone to the Queen

July 21, 1869.—Mr. Gladstone presents his humble duty to your Majesty and reports that the cabinet met at 11 this day, and considered with anxious care its position and duty in regard to the Irish Church bill. The vote and declaration of the House of Lords last night were regarded as fatal if persisted in; and the cabinet deemed it impossible to meet proceedings of such a character with any tender of further concessions. The cabinet, however, considered at much length a variety of courses; as (1) To announce at once that they could no longer, after the vote and announcement of last night, be responsible for further proceedings in connection with the bill, but that they would leave it to the majority of the House of Lords to take such steps as it might think proper: (2) To go through the whole of the amendments of the bill [*i.e* in the House of Lords], and then if they were adversely carried to declare and proceed as above; (3) To go through not the whole of the amendments but the endowment amendments, and to conclude that when these had been adversely decided, they could (as before) assume no further responsibility, but must leave the matter to the majority to consider; (4) To send the bill back to the House of Commons with the declaration that it would not be accepted there, and with the intention of simply moving the House to adhere to its amendments as last adjusted.

Your Majesty has already been apprized by Mr. Gladstone's telegram in cipher of this afternoon, that (under the influence of a strong desire to exhibit patience, and to leave open every opportunity for reconsideration) the third of these courses had been adopted; although there was no doubt that the House of Commons was fully prepared to approve and sustain the first. Lord Granville deemed it just possible that the peers might be prepared to give way before another return of the bill from the House of Commons; and the question therefore was left open whether, if evidence to this effect should appear, the government should then fall in with that course of proceeding. Although the government have felt it to be impossible to make biddings in the face of the opposition, the Archbishop of Canterbury has been apprized, in strict confidence, of the nature and extent of the concession, which for the sake of peace they would be prepared to recommend. Sir R. Palmer is also substantially aware of it, and has expressed his opinion that on such terms the opposition ought to be ready to conclude the matter.

BOARD AND VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS

Vol. I. page 707

Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Bright

Aug. 21, 1873.—An appeal to me was made to introduce board schools into Hawarden on account of my share in the Education Act. I stated the two views held by different supporters of the Act, respectively on the question of board schools and voluntary schools. For myself, I said, not in education only but *in all things, including education, I prefer voluntary to legal machinery, when the thing can be well done either way.* But this question is not to be decided by a general preference or a general formula. Parliament has referred it to the choice of the local communities. They should decide according to the facts of the case before them. What are the facts in Hawarden? Four-fifths are already provided for; were it only one-fifth or were it two-fifths the case for the board (I said) would be overwhelming. But besides the four-fifths, arrangements are already made for a further provision in a voluntary school. Nothing remains to be done except to build three *infant* schools. The voluntary schools will be governed by a committee, including the churchwardens, and having a majority of laymen. The machinery of a board is of necessity cumbrous, and the method costly in comparison. I hold that we ought not to set up this machinery, in order to create three infant schools, where all the other wants of some 2000 people are already provided for.

VIEWS ON A CLASSICAL EDUCATION

Vol. I. page 708

Mr. Gladstone to Lord Lyttelton

Penmaenmawr, Aug. 29, 1861.—Thanks for the brief notice which you recently took of the Public Schools Commission. I was heartily glad to hear that you had formed a drastic set of questions. I take the deepest interest in the object of the commission, and I have full confidence in its members and organs; and at all times I shall be very

glad to hear what you are doing. Meantime I cannot help giving you, to be taken for what it is worth, the sum of my own thoughts upon the subject. . . . The *low* utilitarian argument in matter of education, for giving it what is termed a practical direction, is so plausible that I think we may on the whole be thankful that the instincts of the country have resisted what in argument it has been ill able to confute. We still hold by the classical training as the basis of a liberal education; parents dispose of their children in early youth accordingly; but if they were asked why they did so, it is probable they would give lamentably weak or unworthy reasons for it, such for example as that the public schools and universities open the way to desirable acquaintance and what is termed 'good society.' Your commission will not I presume be able to pass by this question, but will have to look it in the face; and to proceed either upon a distinct affirmative, or a substantial negative, of the proposition that the classical training is the proper basis of a liberal education. I hope you will hold by affirmation and reject negation.

But the reason why I trouble you upon the subject is this, that I think the friends of this principle have usually rather blinked the discussion, and have been content with making terms of compromise by way of buying off the adversary, which might be in themselves reasonable unless they were taken as mere instalments of a transaction intended in the long run to swallow up the principle itself. What I feel is that the relation of pure science, natural science, modern languages, modern history, and the rest of the old classical training, ought to be founded on a principle and ought not to be treated simply as importunate creditors, that take a shilling in the £ to-day, because they hope to get another shilling to-morrow, and in the meantime have a recognition of their title. This recognition of title is just what I would refuse. I deny their right to a parallel or equal position; their true position is auxiliary, and as auxiliary it ought to be limited and restrained without scruple, as a regard to the paramount matter of education may dictate.

But why after all is the classical training paramount? Is it because we find it established? because it improves memory or taste, or gives precision, or develops the faculty of speech? All these are but partial and fragmentary statements, so many narrow glimpses of a great and comprehensive truth. That truth I take to be that the modern European civilisation from the middle age downwards is the compound of two great factors, the Christian religion for the spirit of man, and the Greek, and in a secondary degree the Roman discipline for his mind and intellect. St. Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles, and is in his own person a symbol of this great wedding: the place, for example, of Aristotle and Plato in Christian education is not arbitrary nor in principle mutable. The materials of what we call classical training were prepared, and we have a right to say were advisedly prepared, in order that it might become not a mere adjunct but (in mathematical phrase) the complement of Christianity in its application to the culture of the human being formed both for this world and for the world to come.

If this principle be true it is broad and high and clear enough, and supplies a key to all questions connected with the relation between the classical training of our youth and all other branches of their secular

education. It must of course be kept within its proper place, and duly limited as to things and persons. It can only apply in full to that small proportion of the youth of any country, who are to become in the fullest sense educated men. It involves no extravagant or inconvenient assumptions respecting those who are to be educated for trades and professions in which the necessities of specific training must limit general culture. It leaves open every question turning upon individual aptitudes and inaptitudes and by no means requires that boys without a capacity for imbibing any of the spirit of classical culture are still to be mechanically plied with the instruments of it after their unfitness has become manifest. But it lays down the rule of education for those who have no internal and no external disqualification; and that rule, becoming a fixed and central point in the system, becomes also the point around which all others may be grouped.

Mr. Gladstone to Sir S. Northcote

Nov. 12, 1861.—The letter I wrote to Lyttelton about the classical education suggested topics, which as you justly perceive are altogether esoteric. They have never to my knowledge been carefully worked out, and I think they well deserve it; but clearly your report is not the place. I will not say you are not prudent in suggesting that you should not even give an opinion upon the great question: What is the true place of the old classical learning in the human culture of the nineteenth century? I am far from venturing to say the contrary. But one thing I do think, namely, that it is desirable that, as far as may be, the members of the commission should have some answer to that question in their minds, and should write their report with reference to it. For centuries, through the lifetime of our great schools this classical culture has been made the *lapis angularis* of all secular culture of the highest class. Was this right or was it wrong, aye or no? I think it much to be desired that the commission should if they will, proceed upon the affirmative or negative of that proposition, and should also make their choice for the former. This would be a keynote to their report; but it need not be distinctly and separately heard in it. Such is my notion. As to particulars I have little to say that is worth hearing; but I think these three things. First, that we give much too little scope for deviation from what I think the normal standard to other and useful branches, when it has become evident that the normal standard is inapplicable; just as was the case in Oxford before the reform of the examinations, or let me rather say the new statutes. Secondly, I am extremely jealous of any invasion of modern languages which is to displace classical culture, or any portion of it in minds capable of following that walk. (I take it that among the usual modern tongues Italian has by far the greatest capacity for strict study and scholarship; whereas it is the one least in favour and the whole method of dealing with them is quite alien to strict study.) Lastly, I confess I grieve over the ignorance of natural history which I feel in myself and believe to exist in others. At some time, in some way, much more of all this ought to be brought in, but clearly it would serve in a great degree as recreation, and need not thrust aside whatever hard work boys are capable of doing.

POSITION OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN PARLIAMENT

Vol. I. pages 748-749

Mr. Gladstone to the Queen

July 8, 1871.—Mr. Gladstone believes that according to precedent the commander-in-chief, when a peer, has not shrunk from giving his opinion on measures submitted to the House of Lords. In 1847, the government of that day introduced the Short Service bill, of which on the merits it is believed that the Duke of Wellington, then commander-in-chief, did not approve. Indeed he expressed in debate on April 26th, 1847, his doubts whether the measure would produce the advantages which were anticipated from it; nevertheless, while having no political connection with the government, he spoke and voted in a division for the bill. It is probable, as the numbers were only 108 to 94, that his speech and vote alone carried the bill. Your Majesty will not fail to bear in mind that until 1855, there was always a very high military authority who was in political connection with the government, namely, the master of the ordnance. Indeed, unless Mr. Gladstone's recollection deceives him, Lord Beresford was required by the Duke of Wellington in 1829, as master of the ordnance, to support the Roman Catholic Relief bill. And it is still regretted by many that ministries have not since comprehended any such officer. All question, however, as to the political support of a ministry by the military chiefs of the army is now at an end.

A SOLDIER AT THE WAR OFFICE

Vol. I. pages 748-749

Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Cardwell

Jan. 5, 1871.—It was a great advantage before 1854, that there was always a considerable soldier either in the cabinet or at least at the head of an important military department, and politically associated with the government. This we lost by the crude and ill-advised reconstructions of '55. But you, following in this point a wise initiative of your predecessor, have endeavoured to bring the appointment of Sir H. Storks into a position which makes it probably the best substitute for the former plan that can be had at present. The demand that a soldier shall be appointed at the present time would hold good *a fortiori* for all periods of greater emergency. I know not where that principle has been admitted in our military administration. If we have committed gross errors, it has been owing to an excess much more than to a defect of professional influence and counsel. In my opinion the qualities of a good administrator and statesman go to make a good war minister, especially at this juncture, far more than those of a good soldier. Show me the soldier who has those equally with you, and then let him take your place as S.S. But not till then. You were chosen for your office, not because you would do tolerably for easy times, and then could walk out, but because you were the best man the party could supply for the post. The reproaches aimed at you now are merely aimed at the government through you, and you are chosen to be the point of attack because the nation is sore on military matters in times of crisis, and the press

which ought to check excitement, by most of its instruments ministers to its increase. You find yourself unable to suggest a successor ; and I have seen no plan that would not weaken the government instead of strengthening it. You see what eulogies have been passed on Bright, now he is gone. You would rise in the market with many after resigning, to depreciate those who remain behind ; but as I have said, you would not be allowed to have had a legitimate cause of going, and as far as my observation goes, retirements are quite as critically judged as acceptances of office, perhaps more so. What is really to be desired, is that we should get Storks into parliament if possible.

MR. GLADSTONE'S FINANCIAL LEGACY, 1869

Vol. I. page 756

Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Lowe

Hawarden, Jan. 9, 1869.—I have referred to my list of remnants ; and I will begin with those that I tried in parliament and failed in :— 1. Collection of taxes by Queen's officers instead of local officers. 2. Taxation of charities. 3. Bill for restraining, with a view to ultimately abolishing, the circulation of the notes of private banks. 4. Plan for bringing the chancery and other judicial accounts under the control of parliament. Here I had a commission (on chancery accounts) but did not dare to go farther.

The following are subjects which I was not able to take in hand :—

1. Abolition of the remaining duty upon corn ; an exceeding strong case. 2. I should be much disposed to abolish the tea licences as greatly restrictive of the consumption of a dutiable and useful commodity. I modified them ; but am not sure that this was enough. The B.I.R. could throw light on this subject. 3. The probate duty calls, I fear, loudly for change ; but I wanted either time or courage to take it in hand. 4. The remaining conveyance duties, apart from railways, I always considered as marked for extinction. On this subject Mr. Ayrton has rather decided antecedents. 5. The fire insurance duty is sure to be further assailed. Though not as bad (relatively to other taxes) as is supposed, it is bad enough to be very hard to defend in an adverse House ; and this is one of the questions on which it is not likely that the opposition will help to see fair play. The promises that liberal reduction will lead to recovery of anything like the old or previous revenue have always been confidently pressed by irresponsible men, and are in my opinion illusory. The tax is a tax on property : and, as we have too few of these rather than too many, what would seem desirable is to commute it ; leaving no more than a penny stamp on the policy. This might perhaps be done, if it were made part of a large budget. 6. The income-tax at 6d., I suppose, presents a forward claim. 7. The commutation of malt duty for beer duty must always, I presume, be spoken of with respect ; but the working objections to it have thus far been found too hard to deal with.

There is always room in detail for amendments of stamp duties, but the great case as among them is the probate. They are of a class which, without any legal knowledge, I found very hard to work through the House of Commons. I do not look upon the Act of 1844, as the *end* of legislation in currency ; but this subject is a big one. Scotch and Irish

notes would be hard to deal with until the English case is disposed of. I forget whether we have abolished the last of the restrictions on newspapers. If not, they deserve to be taken in hand, according to me. I have always wished to equalise the outgoings of the exchequer as much as possible over the several weeks of the year. Few incomes admit of this advantage in the same degree as the public income. It would make our 'account' much more valuable to our bankers; therefore to us.

These, I think, were the main matters which lay more or less in perspective before me. I must add that I am strongly in favour of paying off the national debt, not only by annual surpluses, but by terminable annuities *sold to the national debt commissioners for securities held by them against deposit monies.* The opponents of this plan were Mr. Hubbard and Mr. Laing. I am satisfied that neither of them had taken the trouble, and it requires some trouble, to understand it. I admit them to be no mean authorities. Terminable annuities sold to others than yourself are quite another matter. I got into the law some power of this kind over post office savings bank monies to be exercised by the chancellor of the exchequer from time to time.

This is all I need trouble you with, and I have endeavoured to keep clear of all idiosyncratic propositions as much as in me lies. Of course such a letter calls for no answer. As this legacy opinion to you takes the form of a donation *inter vivos* it will, I hope, escape duty.

PRINCE ALBERT, 1854

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Mr. Gladstone wrote an elaborate article in the *Morning Chronicle* (Jan. 16, 1854) warmly defending the court against attacks that had clouded the popularity of the Prince Consort. They came to little more than that the Prince attended meetings of the privy council; that he was present when the Queen gave an audience to a minister; that he thwarted ministerial counsels and gave them an un-English character; that in corresponding with relatives abroad he used English influence apart from the Queen's advisers. Mr. Gladstone had no great difficulty in showing how little this was worth, either as fact supported by evidence, or as principle supported by the fitness of things; and he put himself on the right ground. 'We do not raise the question whether, if the minister thinks it right to communicate with the sovereign alone, he is not entitled to a private audience. But we unhesitatingly assert that if the Prince is present when the Queen confers with her advisers, and if his presence is found to be disadvantageous to the public interests, we are not left without a remedy; for the minister is as distinctly responsible for those interests in this as in any other matter, and he is bound on his responsibility to parliament, to decline compliance even with a personal wish of the sovereign when he believes that his assent would be injurious to the country.'

PARLIAMENTARY CRISES

Vol. II. page 44

Extract from Mr. Gladstone's letter to the Queen, March 15, 1873

There have been within that period [1830-1873] twelve of what may be properly called parliamentary crises involving the question of a change

of government. In nine of the twelve cases (viz. those of 1830, 1835, 1841, 1846, 1852, 1858, 1859, 1866, and 1868), the party which had been in opposition was ready to take, and did take, office. In the other three it failed to do this (viz. in 1832, 1851, 1855), and the old ministry or a modification of it returned to power. But in each of these three cases the attempt of the opposition to form a government was not relinquished until after such efforts had been made by its leaders as to carry the conviction to the world that all its available means of action were exhausted; and there is no instance on record during the whole period (or indeed so far as Mr. Gladstone remembers at an earlier date) in which a summary refusal given on the instant by the leader was tendered as sufficient to release the opposition from the obligations it had incurred. This is the more remarkable because in two of the three instances the opposition had not, in the same mode or degree as on Wednesday morning last, contributed by concerted action to bring about the crisis. On the 7th of May 1832 the opposition of the day carried in the House of Lords a motion which went only to alter the order of the opening (and doubtless very important) clauses of the Reform bill, but which the government of Lord Grey deemed fatal to the integrity of the measure. Their resignation was announced, and Lord Lyndhurst was summoned to advise King William IV. on the 9th of May. On the 12th the Duke of Wellington was called to take a share in the proceedings, the details of which are matters of history. It was only on the 15th that the Duke and Lord Lyndhurst found their resources at an end, when Lord Grey was again sent for, and on the 17th the Duke announced in the House of Lords his abandonment of the task he had strenuously endeavoured to fulfil. On the 20th February 1851 the government of Lord Russell was defeated in the House of Commons on Mr. Locke King's bill for the enlargement of the county franchise by a majority composed of its own supporters. Lord Derby, then Lord Stanley, being sent for by your Majesty on the 22nd, observed that there were at the time three parties in the House of Commons and that the ministry had never yet been defeated by his political friends. He therefore counselled your Majesty to ascertain whether the government of Lord Russell could not be strengthened by a partial reconstruction, and failing that measure he engaged to use his own best efforts to form an administration. That attempt at reconstruction (to which nothing similar is now in question) did fail, and Lord Derby was therefore summoned by your Majesty on the 25th, and at once applied himself, as is well known, to every measure which seemed to give him a hope of success in constructing a government. On the 27th he apprised your Majesty of his failure in these efforts; and on March 3rd the cabinet of Lord Russell returned to office. (This recital is founded on Lord Derby's statement in the House of Lords, Feb. 28, 1851.) On Jan. 29, 1855, the government of Lord Aberdeen was defeated in the House of Commons on a motion made by an independent member of their own party and supported by twenty-five of the liberal members present. Though this defeat resembles the one last named in that it cannot be said to be due to the concerted action of the opposition as a party, Lord Derby, being summoned by your Majesty on the 1st of Feb., proceeded to examine and ascertain in every quarter the means likely to be at his disposal for rendering assistance in the exigency, and it was not until Feb. 3 that he receded from his endeavours.

CABINET OF 1880-1885

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First lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer	W. E. Gladstone.
Lord chancellor	Lord Selborne.
President of the council	Earl Spencer.
Lord privy seal	Duke of Argyll.
Home secretary	Sir W. V. Harcourt.
Foreign secretary	Earl Granville.
Colonial secretary	Earl of Kimberley.
War secretary	H. C. E. Childers.
First lord of the admiralty	Earl of Northbrook.
Indian secretary	Marquis of Hartington.
President of the board of trade	Joseph Chamberlain.
Chief secretary for Ireland	W. E. Forster.
Chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster	John Bright.
President of the local government board	J. G. Dodson.

On the resignation of the Duke of Argyll, April 1881, Lord Carlingford (Mr. Chichester Fortescue) became lord privy seal.

In May 1882, Earl Spencer became lord-lieutenant of Ireland. On Mr. Forster's resignation he was succeeded by Lord Frederick Cavendish, and he then by Mr. G. O. Trevelyan, neither of whom had a seat in the cabinet.

On the resignation of Mr. Bright in July 1882, Mr. Dodson became chancellor of the duchy, and Sir Charles Dilke president of the local government board.

In December 1882 Mr. Gladstone resigned the chancellorship of the exchequer to Mr. Childers; Lord Hartington became war secretary; Lord Kimberley, Indian secretary, and Lord Derby, colonial secretary.

In March 1883, Lord Carlingford succeeded Earl Spencer as president of the council.

In October 1884, Mr. Trevelyan succeeded Mr. Dodson as chancellor of the duchy (with the cabinet), Mr. Campbell-Bannerman becoming Irish secretary without a seat in the cabinet.

In February 1885, Lord Rosebery, first commissioner of works, succeeded Lord Carlingford as lord privy seal (with the cabinet) [Lord Carlingford had also been president of the council from March 1883 in succession to Lord Spencer], and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, postmaster-general, entered the cabinet.

IRISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT, 1883

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Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville

Cannes, Jan. 22, 1883.—To-day I have been a good deal distressed by a passage as reported in Hartington's very strong and able speech, for which I am at a loss to account, so far does it travel out into the open, and so awkward are the intimations it seems to convey. I felt that I

could not do otherwise than telegraph to you in cipher on the subject. But I used words intended to show that, while I thought an immediate notification needful, I was far from wishing to hasten the reply, and desired to leave altogether in your hands the mode of touching a delicate matter. Pray use the widest discretion.

I console myself with thinking it is hardly possible that Hartington can have meant to say what nevertheless both *Times* and *Daily News* make him seem to say, namely, that we recede from, or throw into abeyance, the declarations we have constantly made about our desire to extend local government, properly so called, to Ireland on the first opportunity which the state of business in parliament would permit. We announced our intention to do this at the very moment when we were preparing to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act. Since that time we have seen our position in Ireland immensely strengthened, and the leader of the agitation has even thought it wise, and has dared, to pursue a somewhat conciliatory course. Many of his coadjutors are still as vicious, it may be, as ever, but how can we say (for instance) to the Ulster men, you shall remain with shortened liberties and without local government, because Biggar and Co. are hostile to British connection?

There has also come prominently into view a new and powerful set of motives which, in my deliberate judgment, require us, for the sake of the United Kingdom even more than for the sake of Ireland, to push forward this question. Under the present highly centralised system of government, every demand which can be started on behalf of a poor and ill-organized country, comes directly on the British government and treasury; if refused it becomes at once a head of grievance, if granted not only a new drain but a certain source of political complication and embarrassment. The peasant proprietary, the winter's distress, the state of the labourers, the loans to farmers, the promotion of public works, the encouragement of fisheries, the promotion of emigration, each and every one of these questions has a sting, and the sting can only be taken out of it by our treating it in correspondence with a popular and responsible Irish body, competent to act for its own portion of the country.

Every consideration which prompted our pledges, prompts the recognition of them, and their extension rather than curtailment. The Irish government have in preparation a Local Government bill. Such a bill may even be an economy of time. By no other means that I can see shall we be able to ward off most critical and questionable discussions on questions of the class I have mentioned. The argument that we cannot yet trust Irishmen with popular local institutions is the mischievous argument by which the conservative opposition to the Melbourne government resisted, and finally crippled, the reform of municipal corporations in Ireland. By acting on principles diametrically opposite, we have broken down to thirty-five or forty what would have been a party, in this parliament, of sixty-five home rulers, and have thus arrested (or at the very least postponed) the perilous crisis, which no man has as yet looked in the face; the crisis which will arise when a large and united majority of Irish members demand some fundamental change in the legislative relations of the two countries. I can ill convey to you how clear are my thoughts, or how earnest my convictions, on this important subject. . . .

GENERAL GORDON'S INSTRUCTIONS

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The following is the text of General Gordon's Instructions (*Jan.* 18, 1884):—

Her Majesty's Government are desirous that you should proceed at once to Egypt, to report to them on the military situation in the Soudan, and on the measures it may be advisable to take for the security of the Egyptian garrisons still holding positions in that country, and for the safety of the European population in Khartoum. You are also desired to consider and report upon the best mode of effecting the evacuation of the interior of the Soudan, and upon the manner in which the safety and good administration by the Egyptian government of the ports on the sea coast can best be secured. In connection with this subject you should pay especial consideration to the question of the steps that may usefully be taken to counteract the stimulus which it is feared may possibly be given to the slave trade by the present insurrectionary movement, and by the withdrawal of the Egyptian authority from the interior. You will be under the instructions of Her Majesty's agent and consul-general at Cairo, through whom your reports to Her Majesty's government should be sent under flying seal. You will consider yourself authorised and instructed to perform such other duties as the Egyptian government may desire to entrust to you, and as may be communicated to you by Sir E. Baring. You will be accompanied by Colonel Stewart, who will assist you in the duties thus confided to you. On your arrival in Egypt you will at once communicate with Sir E. Baring, who will arrange to meet you and will settle with you whether you should proceed direct to Suakin or should go yourself or despatch Colonel Stewart *viâ* the Nile.

THE MILITARY POSITION IN THE SOUDAN, April 1885

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This Memorandum, dated April 9, 1885, *was prepared by Mr. Gladstone for the cabinet* :—

The commencement of the hot season appears, with other circumstances, to mark the time for considering at large our position in the Soudan. Also a declaration of policy is now demanded from us in nearly all quarters. . . . When the betrayal of Khartoum had been announced, the desire and intention of the cabinet were to reserve for a later decision the question of an eventual advance upon that place, should no immediate movement on it be found possible. The objects they had immediately in view were to ascertain the fate of Gordon, to make every effort on his behalf, and to prevent the extension of the area of disturbance.

But Lord Wolseley at once impressed upon the cabinet that he required, in order to determine his immediate military movements, to know whether they were to be based upon the plan of an eventual advance on Khartoum, or whether the intention of such an advance was to be abandoned altogether. If the first plan were adopted, Lord Wolseley declared his power and intention to take Berber, and even gave a possible date for it, in the middle of March. The cabinet, adopting the phrase which Lord Wolseley had used, decided upon the

facts as they then stood before it:—(*a*) Lord Wolseley was to calculate upon proceeding to Khartoum after the hot season, to overthrow the power of the Mahdi there; (*b*) and, consequently, on this decision, they were to commence the construction of a railway from Suakin to Berber, in aid of the contemplated expedition; (*c*) an expedition was also to be sent against Osman Digna, which would open the road to Berber; but Lord Wolseley's demand for this expedition applied alike to each of the two military alternatives which he had laid before the cabinet.

There was no absolute decision to proceed to Khartoum at any time; and the declarations of ministers in parliament have treated it as a matter to be further weighed; but all steps have thus far been taken to prepare for it, and it has been regarded as at least probable. In approaching the question whether we are still to proceed on the same lines, it is necessary to refer to the motives which under the directions of the cabinet were stated by Lord Granville and by me, on the 19th of February, as having contributed to the decision. I copy out a part of the note from which he and I spoke:—

Objects in the Soudan which we have always deemed fit for consideration as far as circumstances might allow:

1. The case of those to whom Gordon held himself bound in honour.
2. The possibility of establishing an orderly government at Khartoum.
3. Check to the slave trade.
4. The case of the garrisons.

A negative decision would probably have involved the abandonment at a stroke of all these objects. And also (we had to consider) whatever dangers, proximate or remote, in Egypt or in the East might follow from the triumphant position of the Mahdi; hard to estimate, but they may be very serious.

Two months, which have passed since the decision of the government (Feb. 5), have thrown light, more or less, upon the several points brought into view on the 19th February. 1. We have now no sufficient reason to assume that any of the population of Khartoum felt themselves bound to Gordon, or to have suffered on his account; or even that any large numbers of men in arms perished in the betrayal of the town, or took his part after the enemy were admitted into it. 2. We have had no tidings of anarchy at Khartoum, and we do not know that it is governed worse, or that the population is suffering more, than it would be under a Turkish or Egyptian ruler. 3. It is not believed that the possession of Khartoum is of any great value as regards the slave trade. 4. Or, after the failure of Gordon with respect to the garrisons, that the possession of Khartoum would, without further and formidable extensions of plan, avail for the purpose of relieving them. But further, what knowledge have we that these garrisons are unable to relieve themselves? There seems some reason to believe that the army of Hicks, when the action ceased, fraternized with the Mahdi's army, and that the same thing happened at Khartoum. Is there ground to suppose that they are hateful unless as representatives of Egyptian power? and ought they not to be released from any obligation to present themselves in that capacity?

With regard to the larger question of eventual consequences in Egypt or the East from the Mahdi's success at Khartoum, it is open to many views, and cannot be completely disposed of. But it may

be observed—1. That the Mahdi made a trial of marching down the Nile and speedily abandoned it, even in the first flush of his success. 2. That cessation of operations in the Soudan does not at this moment mean our military inaction in the East. 3. That the question is one of conflict, not with the arms of an enemy, but with Nature in respect of climate and supply. 4. There remains also a grave question of justice, to which I shall revert.

Should the idea of proceeding to Khartoum be abandoned, the railway from Suakin, as now projected, would fall with it, since it was adopted as a military measure, subsidiary to the advance on Khartoum. The prosecution of it as a civil or commercial enterprise would be a new proposal, to be examined on its merits.

The military situation appears in some respects favourable to the re-examination of the whole subject. The general has found himself unable to execute his intention of taking Berber, and this failure alters the basis on which the cabinet proceeded in February, and greatly increases the difficulty of the autumn enterprise. On the one hand Wolseley's and Graham's forces have had five or six considerable actions, and have been uniformly victorious. On the other hand, the Mahdi has voluntarily retired from Khartoum, and Osman Digna has been driven from the field, but cannot, as Graham says, be followed into the mountains.[1] While the present situation may thus seem opportune, the future of more extended operations is dark. In at least one of his telegrams, Wolseley has expressed a very keen desire to get the British army out of the Soudan.[2] He has now made very large demands for the autumn expedition, which, judging from previous experience and from general likelihood, are almost certain to grow larger, as he comes more closely to confront the very formidable task before him; while in his letter to Lord Hartington he describes this affair to be *the greatest 'since* 1815,' and expresses his hope that all the members of the cabinet clearly understand this to be the case. He also names a period of between two or three years for the completion of the railway, while he expresses an absolute confidence in the power and resources of this country with vast effort to insure success. He means without doubt military success. Political success appears much more problematical.

There remains, however, to be considered a question which I take to be of extreme importance. I mean the moral basis of the projected military operations. I have from the first regarded the rising of the Soudanese against Egypt as a justifiable and honourable revolt. The cabinet have, I think, never taken an opposite view. Mr. Power in his letter from Khartoum before Gordon's arrival, is decided and even fervent in the same sense.

We sent Gordon on a mission of peace and liberation. From such information as alone we have possessed, we found this missionary of peace menaced and besieged, finally betrayed by some of his troops, and slaughtered by those whom he came to set free. This information, however, was fragmentary, and was also one-sided. We have now the advantage of reviewing it as a whole, of reading it in the light of events, and of some auxiliary evidence such as that of Mr. Power.

I never understood how it was that Gordon's mission of peace became one of war. But we knew the nobleness of his philanthropy, and we trusted him to the uttermost, as it was our duty to do. He never

[1] Telegram of April 4. [2] Despatch, March 9.

informed us that he had himself changed the character of the mission. It seemed strange that one who bore in his hands a charter of liberation should be besieged and threatened; but we took everything for granted in his favour, and against his enemies; and we could hardly do otherwise. Our obligations in this respect were greatly enhanced by the long interruption of telegraphic communication. It was our duty to believe that, if we could only know what he was prevented from saying to us, contradictions would be reconciled, and language of excess accounted for. We now know from the letters of Mr. Power that when he was at Khartoum with Colonel de Coetlogon before Gordon's arrival, a retreat on Berber had been actually ordered; it was regarded no doubt as a serious work of time, because it involved the removal of an Egyptian population;[1] but it was deemed feasible, and Power expresses no doubt of its accomplishment.[2] As far as, amidst its inconsistencies, a construction can be put on Gordon's language, it is to the effect that there was a population and a force attached to him, which he could not remove and would not leave.[3] But De Coetlogon did not regard this removal as impracticable, and was actually setting about it. Why Gordon did not prosecute it, why we hear no more of it from Power after Gordon's arrival, is a mystery. Instructed by results we now perceive that Gordon's title as governor-general might naturally be interpreted by the tribes in the light of much of the language used by him, which did not savour of liberation and evacuation, but of powers of government over the Soudan; powers to be used benevolently, but still powers of government. Why the Mahdi did not accept him is not hard to understand, but why was he not accepted by those local sultans, whom it was the basis of his declared policy to re-invest with their ancient powers, in spite of Egypt and of the Mahdi alike? Was he not in short interpreted as associated with the work of Hicks, and did he not himself give probable colour to this interpretation? It must be borne in mind that on other matters of the gravest importance—on the use of Turkish force—on the use of British force—on the employment of Zobeir—Gordon announced within a very short time contradictory views, and never seemed to feel that there was any need of explanation, in order to account for the contradictions. There is every presumption, as well as every sign, that like fluctuation and inconsistency crept into his words and acts as to the liberation of the country; and this, if it was so, could not but produce ruinous effects. Upon the whole, it seems probable that Gordon, perhaps insensibly to himself, and certainly without our concurrence, altered the character of his mission, and worked in a considerable degree against our intentions and instructions.

There does not appear to be any question now of the security of the army, but a most grave question whether we can demonstrate a necessity (nothing less will suffice) for making war on a people who are struggling against a foreign and armed yoke, not for the rescue of our own countrymen, not for the rescue *so far as we know* of an Egyptian population, but with very heavy cost of British life as well as treasure, with a serious strain on our military resources at a most critical time, and with the most serious fear that if we persist, we shall find ourselves engaged in an odious work of subjugation. The discontinuance of these

[1] Power, p. 73 A.
[2] *Ibid.* 75 B.
[3] Egypt, No. 18, p. 34, 1884 (April); Egypt, No. 35, p. 122 (July 30).

military operations would, I presume, take the form of a suspension *sine die*, leaving the future open; would require attention to be paid to defence on the recognised southern frontier of Egypt, and need not involve any precipitate abandonment of Suakin.

HOME RULE BILL, 1886

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The following summary of the provisions of the Home Rule bill of 1886 *supplements the description of the bill given in Chapter V. Book X. :—*

One of the cardinal difficulties of all free government is to make it hard for majorities to act unjustly to minorities. You cannot make this injustice impossible but you may set up obstacles. In this case, there was no novelty in the device adopted. The legislative body was to be composed of two orders. The first order was to consist of the twenty-eight representative peers, together with seventy-five members elected by certain scheduled constituencies on an occupation franchise of twenty-five pounds and upwards. To be eligible for the first order, a person must have a property qualification, either in realty of two hundred pounds a year, or in personality of the same amount, or a capital value of four thousand pounds. The representative peers now existing would sit for life, and, as they dropped off, the crown would nominate persons to take their place up to a certain date, and on the exhaustion of the twenty-eight existing peers, then the whole of the first order would become elective under the same conditions as the seventy-five other members.

The second order would consist of 206 members, chosen by existing counties and towns under the machinery now operative. The two orders were to sit and deliberate together, but either order could demand a separate vote. This right would enable a majority of one order to veto the proposal of the other. But the veto was only to operate until a dissolution, or for three years, whichever might be the longer interval of the two.

The executive transition was to be gradual. The office of viceroy would remain, but he would not be the minister of a party, nor quit office with an outgoing government. He would have a privy council; within that council would be formed an executive body of ministers like the British cabinet. This executive would be responsible to the Irish legislature, just as the executive government here is responsible to the legislature of this country. If any clause of a bill seemed to the viceroy to be *ultra vires*, he could refer it to the judicial committee of the privy council in London. The same reference, in respect of a section of an Irish Act, lay open either to the English secretary of state, or to a suitor, defendant, or other person concerned.

Future judges were to hold the same place in the Irish system as English judges in the English system; their office was to be during good behaviour; they were to be appointed on the advice of the Irish government, removable only on the joint address of the two orders, and their salaries charged on the Irish consolidated fund. The burning question of the royal Irish constabulary was dealt with provisionally. Until a local force was created by the new government, they were to remain at the orders of the lord lieutenant. Ultimately the Irish police

were to come under the control of the legislative body. For two years from the passing of the Act, the legislative body was to fix the charge for the whole constabulary of Ireland.

In national as in domestic housekeeping, the figure of available income is the vital question. The total receipts of the Irish exchequer would be £8,350,000, from customs, excise, stamps, income-tax, and non-tax revenue. On a general comparison of the taxable revenues of Ireland and Great Britain, as tested more especially by the property passing under the death duties, the fair proportion due as Ireland's share for imperial purposes, such as interest on the debt, defence, and civil charge, was fixed at one-fifteenth. This would bring the total charge properly imperial up to £3,242,000. Civil charges in Ireland were put at £2,510,000, and the constabulary charge on Ireland was not to exceed £1,000,000, any excess over that sum being debited to England. The Irish government would be left with a surplus of £404,000. This may seem a ludicrously meagre amount, but, compared with the total revenue, it is equivalent to a surplus on our own budget of that date of something like five millions.

The true payment to imperial charges was to be £1,842,000 because of the gross revenue above stated of £1,400,000 though paid in Ireland in the first instance was really paid by British consumers of whisky, porter, and tobacco. This sum, deducted from £3,342,000, leaves the real Irish contribution, namely £1,842,000.

A further sum of uncertain, but substantial amount, would go to the Irish exchequer from another source, to which we have now to turn. With the proposals for self-government were coupled proposals for a settlement of the land question. The ground-work was an option offered to the landlords of being bought out under the terms of the Act. The purchaser was to be an Irish state authority, as the organ representing the legislative body. The occupier was to become the proprietor, except in the congested districts, where the state authority was to be the proprietor. The normal price was to be twenty years' purchase of the net rental. The most important provision, in one sense, was that which recognised the salutary principle that the public credit should not be resorted to on such a scale as this merely for the benefit of a limited number of existing cultivators of the soil, without any direct advantage to the government as representing the community at large. That was effected by making the tenant pay an annual instalment, calculated on the gross rental, while the state authority would repay to the imperial treasury a percentage calculated on the net rental, and the state authority would pocket the difference, estimated to be about 18 per cent on the sum payable to the selling landlord. How was all this to be secured? Principally, on the annuities paid by the tenants who had purchased their holdings, and if the holdings did not satisfy the charge, then on the revenues of Ireland. All public revenues whatever were to be collected by persons appointed by the Irish government, but these collectors were to pay over all sums that came into their hands to an imperial officer, to be styled a receiver-general. Through him all rents and Irish revenues whatever were to pass, and not a shilling was to be let out for Irish purposes until their obligations to the imperial exchequer had been discharged.

ON THE PLACE OF ITALY

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By the provisions of nature, Italy was marked out for a conservative force in Europe. As England is cut off by the channel, so is Italy by the mountains, from the continental mass. . . . If England commits follies they are the follies of a strong man who can afford to waste a portion of his resources without greatly affecting the sum total. . . . She has a huge free margin, on which she might scrawl a long list of follies and even crimes without damaging the letterpress. But where and what is the free margin in the case of Italy, a country which has contrived in less than a quarter of a century of peace, from the date of her restored independence, to treble (or something near it) the taxation of her people, to raise the charge of her debt to a point higher than that of England, and to arrive within one or two short paces of national bankruptcy?

Italy by nature stands in alliance neither with anarchy nor with Caesarism, but with the cause and advocates of national liberty and progress throughout Europe. Never had a nation greater advantages from soil and climate, from the talents and dispositions of the people, never was there a more smiling prospect (if we may fall back upon the graceful fiction) from the Alpine tops, even down to the Sicilian promontories, than that which for the moment has been darkly blurred. It is the heart's desire of those, who are not indeed her teachers, but her friends, that she may rouse herself to dispel once and for ever the evil dream of what is not so much ambition as affectation, may acknowledge the true conditions under which she lives, and it perhaps may not yet be too late for her to disappoint the malevolent hopes of the foes of freedom, and to fulfil every bright and glowing prediction which its votaries have ever uttered on her behalf.—'*The Triple Alliance and Italy's Place in it*' (*Contemporary Review, Oct.* 1889).

THE GLASGOW PERORATION

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After describing the past history of Ireland as being for more than five hundred years 'one almost unbroken succession of political storm and swollen tempest, except when those tempests were for a time interrupted by a period of servitude and by the stillness of death,' Mr. Gladstone went on:—

Those storms are in strong contrast with the future, with the present. The condition of the Irish mind justifies us in anticipating. It recalls to my mind a beautiful legend of ancient paganism—for that ancient paganism, amongst many legends false and many foul, had also some that were beautiful. There were two Lacedæmonian heroes known as Castor and Pollux, honoured in their life and more honoured in their death, when a star was called after them, and upon that star the fond imagination of the people fastened lively conceptions; for they thought that when a ship at sea was caught in a storm, when dread began to possess the minds of the crew, and peril thickened round them, and even alarm was giving place to despair, that if then in the high heavens this star appeared, gradually and gently but effectually the clouds

disappeared, the winds abated, the towering billows fell down to the surface of the deep, calm came where there had been uproar, safety came where there had been danger, and under the beneficent influence of this heavenly body the terrified and despairing crew came safely to port. The proposal which the liberal party of this country made in 1886, which they still cherish in their mind and heart, and which we trust and believe, they are about now to carry forward, that proposal has been to Ireland and the political relations of the two countries what the happy star was believed to be to the seamen of antiquity. It has produced already anticipations of love and good will, which are the first fruits of what is to come. It has already changed the whole tone and temper of the relations, I cannot say yet between the laws, but between the peoples and inhabitants of these two great islands. It has filled our hearts with hope and with joy, and it promises to give us in lieu of the terrible disturbances of other times, with their increasing, intolerable burdens and insoluble problems, the promise of a brotherhood exhibiting harmony and strength at home, and a brotherhood which before the world shall, instead of being as it hitherto has been for the most part, a scandal, be a model and an example, and shall show that we whose political wisdom is for so many purposes recognised by the nations of civilised Europe and America have at length found the means of meeting this oldest and worst of all our difficulties, and of substituting for disorder, for misery, for contention, the actual arrival and the yet riper promise of a reign of peace.—*Theatre Royal, Glasgow, July* 2, 1892.

THE NAVAL ESTIMATES OF 1894

The first paragraph of this memorandum will be found on p. 561, vol. II. :—

This might be taken for granted as to 1854, 1870, and 1884. That it was equally true in my mind of 1859 may be seen by any one who reads my budget speech of July 18, 1859. I defended the provision as required by and for the time, and for the time only. The occasion in that year was the state of the continent. It was immediately followed by the China war (No. 3) and by the French affair (1861-2), but when these had been disposed of economy began; and, by 1863-4, the bulk of the new charge had been got rid of.

There is also the case of the fortifications in 1860, which would take me too long to state fully. But I will state briefly (1) my conduct in that matter was mainly or wholly governed by regard to peace, for I believed, and believe now, that in 1860 there were only two alternatives; one of them, the French treaty, and the other, war with France. And I also believed in July 1860 that the French treaty must break down, unless I held my office. (2) The demand was reduced from nine millions to about five (has this been done now?). (3) I acted in concert with my old friend and colleague, Sir James Graham. We were entirely agreed.

Terse figures of new estimates.

The 'approximate figure' of charge involved in the new plan of the admiralty is £4,240,000, say 4¼ millions. Being an increase (subject probably to some further increase in becoming an act).

1. On the normal navy estimate 1888-9 (*i.e.* before the Naval Defence Act) of, in round numbers . . . 4½ millions
2. On the first year's total charge under the Naval Defence Act of (1,979,000) . . . . . 2 millions
3. On the estimates of last year 1893-4 of . . . . 3 millions
4. On the total charge of 1893-4 of (1,571,000) . . 1½ million
5. On the highest amount ever defrayed from the year's revenue (1892-3) . . . . . 1½ million
6. On the highest expenditure of any year under the Naval Defence Act which included 1,150,000 of borrowed money 359,000

MR. GLADSTONE'S CABINET COLLEAGUES

Vol. II. page 574.

The following is the list of the seventy ministers who served in cabinets of which Mr. Gladstone was a member :—

1843-45. Peel.
Wellington.
Lyndhurst.
Wharncliffe.
Haddington.
Buccleuch.
Aberdeen.
Graham.
Stanley.
Ripon.
Hardinge.
Goulburn.
Knatchbull.
1846. Ellenborough.
S. Herbert.
Granville Somerset.
Lincoln.
1852-55. Cranworth.
Granville.
Argyll.
Palmerston.
Clarendon.
C. Wood.
Molesworth.
Lansdowne.
Russell.
G. Grey.
Panmure.
Carlisle.
1859-65. Campbell.
G. C. Lewis.
Duke of Somerset.
Milner Gibson.
Elgin.
C. Villiers.
1859-65. Cardwell.
Westbury.
Ripon.
Stanley of Alderley.
1865-66. Hartington.
Goschen.
1868-74. Hatherley.
Kimberley.
Bruce.
Lowe.
Childers.
Bright.
C. Fortescue.
Stansfeld.
Selborne.
Forster.
1880-85. Spencer.
Harcourt.
Northbrook.
Chamberlain.
Dodson.
Dilke.
Derby.
Trevelyan.
Lefevre.
Rosebery.
1886. Herschell.
C. Bannerman.
Mundella.
John Morley.
1892. Asquith.
Fowler.
Acland.
Bryce.
A. Morley.

CHRONOLOGY[1]

1832

Dec. 13. Elected member for Newark, — Gladstone, 887; Handley, 798; Wilde, 726.

1833

Jan. 25. Admitted a law student at Lincoln's Inn.
Mar. 6. Elected member of Carlton Club.
Apr. 30. Speaks on a Newark petition.
May 17. Appointed on Colchester election committee.
,, 21. Presents an Edinburgh petition against immediate abolition of slavery.
June 3. On Slavery Abolition bill.
July 4. On Liverpool election petition.
,, 8. Opposes Church Reform (Ireland) bill.
,, 25 and 29. On negro apprenticeship system.
Aug. 5. Serves on select committee on stationery office.
,, 8. Moves for return on Irish education.

1834

Mar. 12 and 19. On bill disenfranchising Liverpool freemen.
June 4. Serves on select committee on education in England.
July 28. Opposes Universities Admission bill.
Dec. 26. Junior lord of the treasury in Sir R. Peel's ministry.

1835

Jan. 5. Returned unopposed for Newark.
,, 27. Under-secretary for war and the colonies.
Mar. 4. Moves for, and serves on, a committee on military expenditure in the colonies.
,, 19. Brings in Colonial Passengers' bill for improving condition of emigrants.
,, 31. In defence of Irish church.
June 11. Entertained at Newark.
,, 22, July 20. Criticises Municipal Corporation bill.
Aug. 21. Defends House of Lords.
Sept. 23. Death of his mother.

1836

Feb. 8. A member of Aborigines committee.
Mar. 22. On negro apprenticeship in Jamaica.
,, 28. A member of negro apprenticeship committee.
June 1. On Tithes and Church (Ireland) bill.
,, 8. A member of select committee on disposal of land in the colonies.
Oct. 18. Speaks at dinner of Liverpool Tradesmen's Conservative Association.
,, 21. Speaks at dinner of Liverpool Operatives' Conservative Association.

[1] All speeches unless otherwise stated were made in the House of Commons.

1837

Jan. 13. Speaks at Peel banquet at Glasgow.
,, 17. Speaks at Newark.
Feb. 10. Moves for return showing religious instruction in the colonies.
Mar. 7. A member of committee on Irish education.
,, 8. On affairs of Lower Canada.
,, 15. In support of church rates.
,, 28. A member of colonial accounts committee.
Apr. 21. At Newark on Poor Law.
,, 24. Returned unopposed for Newark.
,, 27. Defeated for Manchester,—Thomson, 4127; Philips, 3759; Gladstone, 2324.
Aug. 9. Speaks at dinner at Manchester.
Dec. 12. Member of committee on education of poor children.
,, 22. On Canadian discontent.

1838

Jan. 23. On Canadian affairs.
Mar. 7. Criticises action of government in Canada.
,, 30. In defence of West Indian sugar planters.
June 20. On private bill to facilitate colonisation of New Zealand.
July 10. Moves for a commission on grievances of Cape colonists.
,, 11 and 23. Opposes the appointment of dissenting chaplains in prisons.
,, 27. A member of committee on Scotch education.
,, 30. Opposes grant to Maynooth College.
Aug. Visits the continent. Oct. in Sicily; Dec. in Rome.
Dec. *The Church in its Relations with the State*, published.

1839

Jan. 31. Returns to England.
Apr. 15. Withdraws from Lincoln's Inn.
May 6. Opposes Suspension of the Jamaica constitution.

1839

June 10. Opposes bill for temporary government of Jamaica.
,, 20. Criticises the proposal for a board of education.
July 25. Married to Miss Catherine Glynne at Hawarden.

1840

Mar. 30-Apr. 4. Examiner at Eton for Newcastle scholarship.
Apr. 8. Denounces traffic in opium and Chinese war.
,, 8. A member of committee on opium question.
May 29. In support of Government of Canada bill.
June 3. Eldest son, William Henry, born.
,, 15. On Canadian Clergy Reserves bill.
,, 25. On sugar duties.
,, 29. July 20. Opposes Ecclesiastical Revenues bill.
July 9. A number of select committee on colonisation of New Zealand.
,, 27. Denounces traffic in opium.
Sept. 18. Speaks at Liverpool on religious education.
Nov. *Church Principles considered in their Results*, published.

1841

Jan. 20. On the corn laws at Walsall.
Mar. 31. Proposes rejection of bill admitting Jews to corporate office.
Apr. Revised edition of *The Church in its Relations with the State*, published.
May 10. Opposes reduction of duty on foreign sugar.
July 29. Re-elected for Newark,—Mr. Gladstone, 633; Lord John Manners, 630; Mr. Hobhouse, 394.
Sept. 3. Appointed vice-president of the board of trade.
,, 14. Returned unopposed for Newark.

1842

Feb. 8. Proposes colonial trade resolutions, and brings in

1842

bill for better regulation of railways.

Feb. 14. Replies to Lord J. Russell's condemnation of government's proposals for amending corn law.

,, 15. Opposes Mr. Christopher's sliding scale amendment.

Mar. 9. On second reading of corn law importation bill.

Apr. 15. On Colonial Customs Duties bill.

May 13. On preferential duties for colonial goods.

,, 23. On importation of live cattle.

June 3. On sugar duties.

,, 14. On export duty on coal.

Sept. 18. Loses finger of left hand in gun accident.

1843

Jan. Anonymous article, 'The Course of Commercial Policy at Home and Abroad,' in *Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review.*

,, 6. Inaugural address at opening of Collegiate Institute, Liverpool.

Feb. 13. Replies to Viscount Howick on the corn law.

Apr. 25. Opposes Mr. Ricardo's motion for immediate free trade.

May 9. Opposes Mr. Villiers' motion for the immediate abolition of corn laws.

,, 15. Attends first cabinet as president of the board of trade.

,, 19. Supports bill reducing duty on Canadian corn.

June 13. Opposes Lord J. Russell's motion for fixed duty on imported corn.

Aug. 10. Moves second reading of bill legalising exportation of machinery.

Oct. 'Present Aspects of the Church' in *Foreign and Colonial Review.*

1844

Feb. 5. Moves for select committee on railways.

1844

Mar. 4. On recommendations of committee on railways.

,, 7. On slave trade and commercial relations with Brazil.

,, 12. Replies to Mr. Cobden's speech on his motion for committee on protective duties.

,, 19. On reciprocity in commercial treaties.

,, 26. Opposes motion to extend low duty on Canadian corn to colonial wheat.

April. 'On Lord John Russell's Translation of the Francesca da Rimini,' in the *English Review.*

,, 2. Outlines provisions of Joint Stock Companies Regulation bill.

,, 4. Second son, Stephen Edward, born.

May 18. Presides at Eton anniversary dinner.

June 3. On sugar duties bill.

,, 6. In support of Dissenters' Chapels bill.

,, 25. Opposes Mr. Villiers's motion for abolition of corn laws.

July. Review of 'Ellen Middleton,' in *English Review.*

,, 8. On second reading of Railways bill.

Aug. 5. Introduces three bills for regulating private bill procedure.

Oct. 'The Theses of Erastus and the Scottish Church Establishment' in the *New Quarterly Review.*

Dec. On Mr. Ward's 'Ideal Church,' in *Quarterly Review.*

1845

Jan. 28. Retires from cabinet.

Feb. 4. Personal explanation.

,, 24. In favour of discriminating duties on sugar.

,, 26. Defends distinction between free-labour and slave-labour sugar.

March. *Remarks upon recent Commercial Legislation* published.

1845

April 11. On second reading of Maynooth College bill.
June. Review of 'Life of Mr. Blanco White,' in *Quarterly*.
,, 2. Supports Academical Institutions (Ireland) bill.
July 15. On Spanish treaties and slave-labour sugar.
Sept. 25-Nov. 18. Visits Germany.
Dec. 'Scotch Ecclesiastical Affairs,' in the *Quarterly*.
,, 23. Colonial secretary.
Publishes, *A Manual of Prayers from the Liturgy, Arranged for Family Use.*

1846

Jan. 5. Retires from the representation of Newark.

1847

June. 'From Oxford to Rome' in the *Quarterly*.
,, 7. Captain Gladstone defends his brother's action in recalling Sir Eardley Wilmot.
Aug. 3. Elected for Oxford University,—Sir R. Inglis, 1700; W. E. Gladstone, 997; Mr. Round, 824.
Sept. On Lachmann's 'Ilias' in the *Quarterly*.
Dec. 8. Supports Roman Catholic Relief bill.
,, 13. On government of New Zealand.
,, 16. In favour of admission of Jews to parliament.

1848

Feb. 9 and 14. On New Zealand Government bill.
,, 16. On Roman Catholic Relief bill.
Mar. 10. On recent commercial changes.
Apr. 3. On repeal of Navigation laws, criticising government's proposal.
,, 4. On episcopal revenues.
,, 10. Serves as special constable.

1848

Apr. 22. Moves address to the Queen at vestry of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.
May 16. In favour of increasing usefulness of cathedrals.
,, 23. Replies to Lord G. Bentinck on free trade.
June 2. In favour of freedom of navigation.
,, 22. Opposes reduction of sugar duties.
Aug. 17.. In favour of legalising diplomatic relations with the Vatican.
,, 18. On Vancouver's Island, and free colonisation.
Dec. On the Duke of Argyll's *Presbytery Examined* in the *Quarterly*.

1849

Feb. 19. On revision of parliamentary oaths.
,, 22, May 2. In favour of Clergy Relief bill.
Mar. 8. On transportation of convicts.
,, 12. On Navigation laws.
,, 13. On church rates.
,, 27. In favour of scientific colonisation at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.
Apr. 16. On colonial administration.
May 10. Defends right of parliament to interfere in colonial affairs.
,, 24. In favour of better government of colonies.
June 4. On Australian Colonies bill.
,, 14. Protests against compensating Canadian rebels.
,, 20. Opposes bill legalising marriage with deceased wife's sister.
,, 26. Explains views on colonial questions and policy.
July 5. Moves for inquiry into powers of Hudson Bay Company.
,, 13-Aug. 9. Visits Italy: Rome, Naples, Como.
Dec. 'The Clergy Relief Bill' in *Quarterly*.

1850

Feb. 8. In favour of double chamber constitutions for colonies.
,, 21. On causes of agricultural distress, in support of Mr. Disraeli's motion.
Mar. 'Giacomo Leopardi' in the *Quarterly*.
,, 19. On suppression of slave trade.
,, 22. On principles of colonial policy.
Apr. 9. Death of his daughter, Catherine Jessy.
May 6. In favour of colonial self-government, and ecclesiastical constitution for church in Australia.
,, 13. Moves that Australian Government bill be submitted to colonists.
,, 31. In favour of differential sugar duties.
June 4. Letter to Bishop of London: *Remarks on the Royal Supremacy*.
,, 27. Attacks Lord Palmerston's foreign policy in Don Pacifico debate.
July 3. On death of Sir R. Peel.
,, 8. Criticises Ecclesiastical Commission bill.
,, 15. Explains plan for creation of new bishoprics.
,, 18. Opposes commission of inquiry into English and Irish universities.
Aug. 1. 'Last earnest protest' against Australian Colonies Government bill.
Oct. 26. Leaves England for Naples.

1851

Feb. 26. Returns to England from Naples. Declines Lord Stanley's invitation to join his government.
Mar. 25. Opposes Ecclesiastical Titles Assumption bill.
Apr. 11. On financial plans to relieve agricultural distress.
,, 15. Opposes appointment of committee on relations with Kaffir tribes.
May 29. On grievances of inhabitants of Ceylon.

1851

June 30. Opposes Inhabited House Duty bill.
July 4. Protests against Ecclesiastical Titles bill.
,, 10. On Rajah Brooke's methods of suppressing piracy.
,, 19. On discipline in colonial church.
,, Publishes two letters to Lord Aberdeen on Neapolitan misgovernment.
Dec. 7. Death of Sir John Gladstone at Fasque.
,, Letter to Dr. Skinner, Bishop of Aberdeen, *On the functions of laymen in the Church*.
Translation of Farini's *The Roman State*, 1815 to 1850, vols. i. and ii. published.

1852

Jan. 29. Publishes *An examination of the Official Reply of the Neapolitan Government*.
Feb. 20. Brings in Colonial Bishops bill.
Mar. 15. On free trade.
Apr. On Farini's 'Stato Romano,' in *Edinburgh Review*.
,, 2. Third son, Henry Neville, born.
,, 5. Protests against policy of Kaffir war.
,, 28. Moves second reading of Colonial Bishops bill.
,, 30. On Mr. Disraeli's budget statement.
May 10. Proposes rejection of bill to assign disenfranchised seats of St. Albans and Sudbury.
,, 11. In favour of select committee on education at Maynooth College.
,, 12. On paper duty.
,, 21. On New Zealand Government bill.
June 8 and 10. Defends action of Bishop of Bath and Wells in the case of Frome vicarage.
,, 23. Brings in bill to amend colonial church laws.

1852

July 14. Re-elected for Oxford University,—Sir R. Inglis, 1368; W. E. Gladstone, 1108; Dr. Marsham, 758.
Nov. 11, 25. In defence of principles of free trade.
,, 26. Defends Sir R. Peel's free trade policy.
Dec. 'Count Montalembert on Catholic Interests in the Nineteenth Century' in the *Quarterly*.
,, 6. Attacks government's income-tax proposals.
,, 16. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's speech in defence of his budget proposals.
,, 23. Appointed chancellor of the exchequer.

1853

Jan. 20. Re-elected for Oxford University,—W. E. Gladstone, 1022; Mr. Perceval, 898.
Mar. 3. Speech on Mr. Hume's motion for repeal of all protective import duties.
,, 4 and 18. On Clergy reserves (Canada) bill.
,, 28. At Mansion House banquet, on public opinion and public finance.
Apr. 4. On government's proposal to improve education in England and Wales.
,, 8. Explains nature of proposals for conversion of portion of national debt.
,, 8. On Irish taxation.
,, 14. Opposes motion for repeal of advertisement duty, newspaper stamp tax, and paper duty on financial grounds.
,, 18. Introduces his first budget.
,, 22. Defends South Sea commutation bill.
May 9. Opposes amendment, in the interest of property, to income-tax.
,, 12. Explains changes proposed in succession duties.
,, 23. On taxation of Ireland.
June 13. Moves second reading of Savings Bank bill; and July 21.

1853

July 1. Proposes reduction of advertisement duty to sixpence.
,, 29. On South Sea Annuities.
Aug. 3. On Colonial Church Regulation bill.
Sept. 27. At Dingwall and Inverness, on results of free trade and evils of war.
Oct. 12. Tribute to memory of Sir R. Peel at unveiling of statue at Manchester. At town hall on Russo-Turkish question.

1854

Jan. 7. Fourth son, Herbert John, born.
Mar. 6. Introduces budget.
,, 17. In support of Oxford University bill.
,, 21. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's attack on his financial schemes.
,, 25. At Mansion House banquet on war and finance.
Apr. 7. On second reading of Oxford University bill.
,, 11. Statement on public expenditure and income.
May 8. Introduces war budget.
,, 22. Defends resolution empowering government to issue two millions of exchequer bonds against criticism of Mr. Disraeli.
,, 25. On second reading of bill for revision of parliamentary oaths.
,, 29. On withdrawal of Bribery Prevention bills.
June 2. Explains provisions of Revenue and Consolidated Fund Charges bill.
,, 21. On proposal to abolish church rates.
,, 29. Brings in bill for repeal of usury laws.
Dec. 13. On the Crimean war.
,, 2. Moves resolution for regulation of interest on Savings Bank deposits.

1855

Jan. 29. Opposes Mr. Roebuck's motion.

1855

Feb. 5. Explains reasons for government's resignation.
,, 22. Withdraws from cabinet.
,, 23. Explains reasons.
Mar. 19. Explains methods adopted to meet war expenditure.
,, 19. In favour of free press.
,, 26. Defends government of Sardinia in debate on military convention.
Apr. 20. Criticises budget of Sir G. C. Lewis.
,, 26. On principles of taxation.
,, 30. Criticises government Loan bill.
May 9. Opposes bill for amendment of marriage law.
,, 21. Moves adjournment of debate to discuss Vienna conferences.
,, 24. On prosecution of the war.
June 'Sardinia and Rome,' in *Quarterly*.
,, 15. On civil service reform.
,, 15. Statement as to Aberdeen government, and terms of peace.
July 10. In favour of open admission to civil service.
,, 20, 23, and 27. Protests against the system of subsidies, on the guarantee of Turkish loan.
Aug. 3. On Vienna negotiations.
Oct. 12. Lecture on Colonial Policy at Hawarden.
Nov. 12. Lecture on Colonies at Chester.

1856

Feb. 29. On report of Crimean commissioners.
Apr. 11. Condemns government proposals for national education.
,, 24. On civil service reform.
May. 6. On treaty of peace.
,, 19. Criticises budget.
July 1. On differences with the United States government on recruiting for the British army.
,, 11. Criticises County Courts Amendment bill.

1856

July 23. Strongly opposes the Bishops of London and Durham Retirement bill.
Aug. . 'The War and the Peace' in *Gentleman's Magazine*.
Sept. 'The Declining Efficiency of Parliament' in the *Quarterly*.
,, 29. At town hall, Mold, in support of Foreign Missionary Society; in the evening at Collegiate Institution, Liverpool, for Society for Propagation of the Gospel.

1857

Jan. 'Homer and His Successors in Epic Poetry,' and 'Prospects Political and Financial' in *Quarterly*.
,, 31. At Stepney, on duty of rich to poor.
Feb. 3. Criticises government's foreign policy and financial measures.
,, 5. In support of motion to appoint committee on the Hudson Bay Company. Nominated member of the committee.
,, 20. Condemns budget of Sir G. C. Lewis.
Mar. 3. Supports Mr. Cobden's resolution on China.
,, 6. Proposes reduction of tea duty, and condemns Sir G. C. Lewis's financial proposals.
,, 10. Moves resolution in favour of revising and reducing expenditure.
,, 27. Returned unopposed for Oxford University.
Apr. 'The New Parliament and its Work' in *Quarterly*.
June 2. Speaks at Oxford at inauguration of Diocesan Spiritual Help Society.
July 'The Bill for Divorce,' and 'Homeric Characters In and Out of Homer' in *Quarterly*.
,, 9. At Glenalmond College on Christian and classical education.

1857

July 16. On the Persian war.
,, 17. Denounces war with China.
,, 21. On Lord J. Russell's Oaths Validity Act Amendment bill.
,, 22. Aug 4. Criticises and moves amendments to Burials Act Amendment bill.
,, 24. Explains strong objections to Divorce and Matrimonial Causes bill.
,, 29. Opposes Superannuation Act Amendment bill.
,, 31. Opposes second reading of the Divorce bill.
Aug. 7. Protests against unequal treatment of men and women in Divorce bill.
,, 12. Supports continuance of tea and sugar duties.
,, 14. On Balkan Principalities.
,, 14. Personal explanation regarding his connection with Lord Lincoln's divorce.
Oct. 12. At Chester, on duty of England to India.
,, 22. At Liverpool, urging closer connection between the great manufacturing towns and the universities.
Dec. 4 and 7. Criticises the Bank Issues Indemnity bill.
,, 9. Protests against proposal to increase pension of Sir Henry Havelock.
,, 11. On appointment of select committee on Bank Act.

1858

Feb. 19. Opposes Conspiracy to Murder bill.
Mar. *Studies in Homer and the Homeric Age* published.
Apr. 'The Fall of the Late Ministry' in *Quarterly*.
,, 19. On Mr. Disraeli's budget statement.
,, 21, June 8. Criticises Church Rates Abolition bill.
,, 26 and 30. On proposals for government of India.
May. 3. On financial condition of the country.

1858

May 3, June 7, 14, 17, and July 1. On government of India.
,, 4. Moves address on Danubian Principalities.
,, 21. Defends Lord Canning in debate on the Oude Proclamation.
June 1. On the Suez Canal, condemning English interference with the project.
,, 28. Supports Funded Debt bill.
July 1 and 5. Proposes additional clause to Universities (Scotland) bill facilitating the creation of a national university.
,, 6. Moves that the army of India be not employed beyond the frontiers of India without permission of Parliament.
,, 19. On Government of British Columbia bill.
,, 20. On Hudson Bay Company.
Oct. 'The Past and Present Administrations' in *Quarterly*.
,, 17. Address at Liverpool on university extension.
Nov. 8. Leaves England for Corfu. on appointment as lord high commissioner extraordinary of the Ionian Islands.
Dec. 3. Addresses Ionian Assembly.

1859

Feb. 5. Presents new constitution to Ionian Chamber of Deputies.
,, 12. Returned unopposed for Oxford University.
Mar. 8. Returns to London.
,, 29. On Representation of the People bill.
Apr. 'The War in Italy' in the *Quarterly*.
,, 18. On the state of Italy.
,, 29. Returned unopposed for Oxford University.
June 17. Letter to the provost of Oriel.
,, 20. Appointed chancellor of the exchequer.
,, 22. Presides at annual dinner of Royal Literary Fund.

1859

July 1. Re-elected for Oxford University,—Mr. Gladstone, 1050; Marquis of Chandos, 859.
,, 12. Supports bill enabling Roman catholics to hold office of chancellor of Ireland.
,, 18. Introduces budget.
,, 21. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's criticisms.
Aug. 8. In defence of government's Italian policy.
Oct. On 'Tennyson's Poems' in *Quarterly*.
Nov. 1. At Cambridge, in support of Oxford and Cambridge mission to Central Africa.
,, 12. Elected Lord Rector of University of Edinburgh,—Mr. Gladstone, 643; Lord Neaves, 527.
Dec. 'Nelda, a Romance,' translated from Grossi, in *Fraser's Magazine*.

1860

Jan. 25. Defends good understanding with France.
Feb. 10. Introduces budget.
,, 20. Replies to criticisms on commercial treaty.
,, 24. Defends his financial proposals.
,, 27. Defends proposed reduction of duty on foreign wines.
Mar. 5. Explains objects of Savings Banks bill.
,, 9. Defends commercial treaty.
,, 12. On Paper Duty Repeal bill.
,, 26. On Refreshment Houses and Wine Licences bill.
Apr. 16. Inaugural address before University of Edinburgh on the Work of Universities.
May 3. In support of Representation of the People bill.
,, 8. On Paper Duty Repeal bill.
July 5 and 17. Protests against interference of House of Lords with supply bills.
Aug. 6. Defends reduction of Customs Duty on paper.
Nov. 8. At Chester on the volunteer movement.

1861

Feb. 8. Explains provisions of Post Office Savings Bank bill.
,, 19. Opposes inquiry into income-tax.
,, 21. Introduces Bank of England Payments bill.
,, 27. Opposes bill for abolishing church rates.
Mar. 4. Explains provisions of Consolidated Fund and Exchequer Bills Act.
,, 7. Defends the government's Italian policy.
,, 14. On Chinese war expenditure.
Apr. 15. Introduces budget.
,, 29. Replies to criticisms on financial proposals.
May 2. Moves continuance of tea and sugar duties.
,, 6. Announces decision to embody all financial proposals in a single bill.
,, 7. Defends his acts as lord high commissioner of Ionian Islands.
,, 16 and 30. On second reading of Customs and Inland Revenue bill.
July 12. Opposes third reading of Universities Elections bill.
,, 19. On misgovernment of Italy.
Oct. 10. At Liverpool on the Pursuit of Science.
Nov. 27. At Willis's Room, London, on the Christian aspect of education.
Publishes *Translations by Lord Lyttelton and the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone*.

1862

Jan. 11. At Edinburgh on American Civil War, and results of French treaty.
Apr. 3. Introduces budget.
,, 7. Replies to criticisms on budget.
,, 10. Defends proposed brewers' licences.
,, 11. Defends government's Italian policy.
,, 23. At Manchester on value of competitive examinations

1862

and the death of Prince Albert.

Apr. 24. At Manchester condemns extravagance in public expenditure.

May 8. Replies to criticisms of Sir S. Northcote on his financial proposals.

,, 13. Defends principles on which income-tax is levied.

,, 16. In favour of economy.

June 16. At Archbishop Tenison's grammar school on middle class education.

July 26. Pays tribute to Sir Hugh Myddelton at inauguration of his statue on Islington Green.

Aug. 1. Opposes Night Poaching Prevention bill.

Sept. 24. On agriculture at Mold.

Oct. 7. At Newcastle-on-Tyne on the American Civil War and French treaty.

,, 8. Makes a tour of inspection of the Tyne.

,, 9. At Sunderland on government's foreign policy. At Middlesborough on commercial and social progress.

,, 10. At York on America and Italy.

,, 22. At Wrexham on minor railways.

Dec. 27. At Chester on distress in Lancashire.

1863

Jan. 5. At Hawarden on his visit to Sicily, 1838.

Feb. 13. Explains provisions of Post Office Savings Bank bill.

Mar. 4. Supports Qualification for Office Abolition bill.

Apr. 15. Supports Burials bill.

,, 16. Introduces budget.

,, 23. Opposes levying income-tax on precarious incomes at a lower scale than on permanent.

May 4. Receives deputation protesting against income-tax on charity trust funds. Defends the proposal in debate.

1863

May 8. Defends government's Italian policy.

,, 12. On condition of Ionian Islands.

,, 29. On Turkey and her dependencies.

June 9. On relaxation of the Act of Uniformity.

,, 12. On the condition of Ireland.

,, 30. Opposes recognition of the Southern Confederacy.

July 20. On condition of Poland.

,, 24. On petition for abolition of tests at Oxford.

Oct. 26. Lays foundation stone of Wedgwood Memorial Institute at Burslem.

1864

Jan. 4. At Buckley on thrift.

Feb. 4. On Schleswig-Holstein question.

,, 8. On his bill for regulating collection of taxes.

,, 11. Introduces Bank Act (Scotland) bill.

,, 26. On taxation of Ireland.

Mar. 7. Defends provisions of Government Annuity bill.

,, 16. Receives deputation of London Trades Council on Annuity bill.

,, 16. In support of bill abolishing tests for degrees at Oxford.

,, 18. On cession of Ionian Islands to Greece.

Apr. 7. Introduces budget.

,, 21. On departure of General Garibaldi from England.

May 6. On English public school education.

,, 10. On direct and indirect taxation.

,, 11. On Mr. Baines's bill for the extension of the suffrage in towns.

July 3. On the Roman question.

,, 4. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's resolution of censure on Schleswig-Holstein.

Oct. 11. At Bolton on progress of the past thirty years.

1864

Oct. 12. Opens Farnworth Park, Bolton: on the factory system and open spaces. At town hall, Liverpool, on principles of colonial and foreign policy.

,, 13. At Liverpool on direct and indirect taxation.

,, 14. At Manchester appeals to the nation to protest against extravagant expenditure. Distributes prizes at Manchester to competitors in Oxford middle-class examinations: on older and newer pursuits of Christian civilisation.

Nov. 7. Closes the North London Industrial Exhibition.

,, 8. In praise of law and lawyers at banquet to M. Berryer.

,, 10. Commends volunteer movement at dinner of volunteers of the St. Martin's division.[4]

Dec. 30. At Mold on our coal resources.

1865

Feb. 10. Explains provisions of Bank of Issue bill.

,, 14. Announces appointment of commission on railways.

,, 24. On state of Ireland.

Mar. 28. On Irish church establishment.

Apr. 7. On Irish railway system.

,, 27. Introduces budget.

May 31. At Chester on liberal principles and parliamentary reform.

June 14. Opposes Mr. Goschen's bill for abolition of tests at Oxford.

,, 15. Explains provisions of Exchequer and Public Audit Bill.

,, 20. On Irish university education.

July 18. Defeated at Oxford university, — Sir William Heathcote, 3236; Mr. Gathorne Hardy, 1904; Mr. Gladstone, 1724.

1865

At free trade hall, Manchester. In the evening, at St. George's hall, Liverpool, replies to Mr. Disraeli's attack on his finance.

July 22. Elected for South Lancashire, — Egerton, 9171; Turner, 8806; Gladstone, 8786; Legh, 8476, Thompson, 7703; Heywood, 7653.

,, 27 to Aug. 7. Correspondence with Lord Malmesbury on responsibility for Chinese expedition of 1860.

Oct. 18. Tribute to memory of the Duke of Newcastle at Shire Oaks, Notts.

Nov. 1. Presented with address by Parliamentary Reform Union, in trades hall, Glasgow. Presented with freedom of the city in city hall: on increase of commerce and decrease of wars. In Scotia hall on results of free trade, a cheap press, and social legislation.

,, 3. Delivers valedictory address before Edinburgh University on 'The Place of Ancient Greece in the Providential Order of the World.'

1866

Feb. 8. On the condition of Ireland.

,, 9. Introduces bill to consolidate the duties of exchequer and audit departments.

,, 17. Defends suspension of Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland.

,, 22. Tribute to memory of Lord Palmerston.

,, 23. On Fenianism in America.

,, 26. On economy in public expenditure.

Mar. 2. Brings in bill consolidating laws regulating the preparation, issue, and payment of exchequer bills.

1866

Mar. 7. Suggests compromise for settling church rate question.
,, 12. Explains provisions of Representation of the People bill.
Apr. 5. At Liverpool replies to Mr. Lowe's criticisms of the Reform bill.
,, 6. On reform at the amphitheatre, Liverpool.
,, 12. Moves second reading of Reform bill.
,, 27. Closes debate on Earl Grosvenor's amendment to Reform bill.
May 3. Introduces budget.
,, 7. Brings in Redistribution of Seats bill.
,, 8. Brings in Compulsory Church Rate Abolition bill.
,, 24. Explains provisions of Terminable Annuities bill.
June 11. On the state of Europe; Austro-Prussian question, etc.
,, 15. Tribute to Mr. Hume.
,, 18. Moves second reading of Church Rates bill.
,, 18. Opposes Lord Dunkellin's amendment substituting rateable for rental for borough franchise.
,, 26. Announces resignation of Lord Russell's government.
July 16. On the Queen's Universities, Ireland.
,, 20. On the state of Europe and the Italian policy of Lord Palmerston's government.
,, 21. At inaugural meeting of Cobden Club; tribute to work of Mr. Cobden.
Aug. 2. Supports renewal of Habeas Corpus Suspension Act.
Sept. 7. At Salisbury in defence of Reform bill and on Lord Herbert.
Oct. to Jan. In Rome.

1867

Jan. 27. Speech in praise of free trade at dinner of Society of Political Economy, Paris.
Feb. 5. On the question of reform.
,, 11. On the government's intention of proceeding by way of resolutions.
,, 15. On the condition of Crete.
,, 27. Supports bill enabling Roman catholics to hold office of lord lieutenant of Ireland.
Mar. 18. Criticises provisions of the Reform bill.
,, 20. On Church Rates Abolition bill.
,, 21. Meeting of 278 liberal members; advises agreement to second reading of Reform bill.
,, 21. On bill to repeal the Ecclesiastical Titles Act.
,, 25. Criticises Reform bill on second reading.
,, 28. On England's share in the defence of the colonies.
Apr. 4. On Mr. Disraeli's financial statement.
,, 10. On abolition of religious tests at Oxford.
,, 11, 12. Moves amendment making personal payment of rates not an essential qualification for the franchise.
,, 18. Letter to Mr. R. W. Crawford announcing intention not to attempt further alteration in basis of borough franchise.
May 3. On right of public meeting in parks and open spaces.
,, 7. On Irish church establishment.
,, 9. On 'compound householders.'
,, 11. Receives deputation from National Reform Union to express confidence in his leadership.
,, 13. On Scotch Reform bill.
,, 16. Defends policy of reduction of national debt.
,, 28. On inconsistency of the government on reform.
,, 29. On Mr. Lowe's Uni-

1867

formity Act Amendment bill.

May 30. On penalties for corrupt practices at elections.

,, 31. On late ministry's action regarding Queen's Universities, Ireland.

June 28. On representation of Ireland.

July 10. On Mr. H. A. Bruce's Education bill.

Aug. 1. On Irish railways.

,, 8. Opposes Lords' minority representation amendment to Reform bill.

Oct. 'The Session and its Sequel' in *Edinburgh Review*.

Nov. 10. On Abyssinian campaign protests against territorial aggrandizement.

,, 26. On Abyssinian expedition.

,, 28. On financial proposals to meet expenses of Abyssinian war.

Dec. 18. At Oldham on national prosperity and the condition of Ireland. Opens Mechanics' Institute at Werneth: on education. Distributes prizes to science and art students, Oldham: on education, machinery, and foreign competition.

,, 19. At Ormskirk on Reform bill. At Southport on Fenianism and the condition of Ireland

1868

Jan. 'Phœnicia and Greece' in *Quarterly*.

Feb. 3. At Hawarden on Sir Walter Scott.

,, 18. To Deputation from London Trades Unions on labour questions.

Mar. 6. On *Alabama* claims.

,, 16. Declares for disestablishment of Irish church.

,, 19. On Compulsory Church Rates Abolition bill.

1868

Mar. 23. Gives notice of three resolutions on Irish church establishment.

,, 30. In support of his resolutions.

Apr. 3. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's criticisms.

,, 30. Replies to criticisms of first resolution.

May 4. Protests against intention to dissolve parliament.

,, 7. Moves second and third resolutions on Irish church.

,, 22. On Suspensory bill.

June 9, July 26. On proposal to purchase the telegraph system.

,, 25. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's attack on foreign policy of Lord Russell's ministry.

July 2. Seconds vote of thanks to army on conclusion of Abyssinian war.

,, 4. Presides at meeting of Social Science Association: on relations of capital and labour.

,, 22. At Romsey on England's duty to Ireland.

,, 27. Tribute to memory of Lord Brougham.

Aug. 5. At St. Helens on disestablishment of Irish church.

Oct. 9. Issues election address to S.-W. Lancashire.

,, 12. At Warrington on retrenchment of public expenditure and the Irish Church.

,, 14. At Liverpool on tory Reform bill and Irish church.

,, 16. At Old Swan, Liverpool, on conservative party as party of monopoly.

,, 17. At Newton criticises proposals for reforming Irish church.

,, 20. At Leigh on retrenchment and Ireland.

,, 21. At Ormskirk on English and Irish church establishments. At Southport on finance and Ireland.

,, 23. At Wigan on Irish church.

Nov. 13. At Bootle replies to per-

1868

sonal calumnies, and on ritualism.

Nov. 14. At Garston on condition of conservative party. At Wavertree on Irish church.

,, 16. At Widnes on national expenditure. At St. Helens on Ireland.

,, 17. Elected for Greenwich, —Salomons, 6645; Gladstone, 6351; Parker, 4661; Mahon, 4342.

,, 18. At Preston on Irish church.

,, 23. *A Chapter of Autobiography* published.

,, 24. Defeated in S.-W. Lancashire, — Cross, 7729; Turner, 7676; Gladstone, 7415; Grenfell, 6939.

Dec. 9. First ministry formed.

,, 21. Returned unopposed for Greenwich: on the liberal programme.

Articles on *Ecce Homo* published volume form.

1869

Feb. 11. At Fishmongers' hall on work before liberal government.

Mar. 1. Introduces bill for disestablishment of Irish church.

,, 23. Closes debate on second reading of Irish Church bill.

Apr. 15. Replies to criticisms of Irish Church bill.

May 31. On third reading of Irish Church bill.

June 29. Defends change of opinion on university tests.

July 15, 16. Moves rejection of Lords' amendments to Irish Church bill.

,, 20. Supports Mr. Chambers's Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister bill.

,, 23. Moves to agree to final amendments of Lords.

Aug. 5. Explains Bishops' Resignation bill.

Publishes *Juventus Mundi. The Gods and Men of the Heroic Age.*

1870

Feb. 8. On condition of Ireland.

,, 15. Brings in Irish Land bill.

Mar. 1. On state-aided emigration to British colonies.

,, 11. On second reading of Irish Land bill.

,, 18. On Elementary Education bill.

,, 22. On Peace Preservation (Ireland) bill.

Apr. 1. On position of Trinity College, Dublin.

,, 4. Opposes Mr. Disraeli's amendment to clause 3 of Irish Land Bill.

,, 5. Opposes payment of members.

,, 11. Moves for committee to inquire into law regarding corrupt practices.

,, 26. On his principles of colonial policy.

,, 27. In support of Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister bill.

May 10. On Indian opium revenue.

,, 23. In support of University Tests bill.

,, 24. Opposes motion in favour of disestablishing church of England in Wales.

,, 30. On third reading of Irish Land bill.

June 15. In support of bill abolishing minority representation.

,, 16 and 24. On Elementary Education bill.

,, 21. In favour of presence of bishops in House of Lords.

,, 30. On conscience clause in Education bill. On religious teaching in elementary schools.

July 14. Defends vote by ballot in Education bill.

,, 22. Replies to reproaches from Mr. Miall and Mr. Dixon on Education bill.

,, 27. Supports second reading of Ballot bill.

Aug. 1. On Franco-German war and neutrality of Belgium.

,, 10. On treaty guaranteeing

1870

independence and neutrality of Belgium.

Oct. 'Germany, France, and England' in *Edinburgh Review*.

Nov. 1. Closes Workman's International Exhibition, Islington: on benefit to English commerce of foreign competition.

,, 9. At Lord Mayor's banquet on Franco-German war.

1871

Feb. 9. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's criticisms of government's foreign policy.

,, 10. On University Tests bill.

,, 13. Defends Princess Louise's dowry and annuity.

,, 17. Defends the government's foreign policy.

,, 24. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's attack on his interpretation of treaty of Paris (1856).

Mar. 2. On appointment of committee to inquire into Ribandism in West Meath.

,, 17. Replies to criticisms on Mr. Cardwell's Army Regulation bill.

,, 23. On Mr. Mundella's motion that army might be made efficient without increasing estimates.

,, 29. On Parochial Councils bill.

,, 31. Explains policy during Franco-German war.

Apr. A poem on 'an infant who was born, was baptized, and died on the same day,' in *Good Words*.

,, 18. On dismissal of Sir Spencer Robinson.

,, 24. Defends moderate increase of public expenditure under his government.

May 1. Defends modification in budget.

,, 3. On Mr. Jacob Bright's bill granting parliamentary suffrage to single women.

,, 4. Defends principle of reduction of national debt.

1871

May 9. Opposes motion for disestablishment of the church of England.

,, 26. On Protection of Life (Ireland) bill.

June 29. On Ballot bill.

July 3. On third reading of Army Regulation bill.

,, 20. Announces abolition of purchase by royal warrant.

,, 31. Proposes annuity of £15,000 for Prince Arthur.

Aug. 2. On Mr. Fawcett's Trinity College, Dublin, bill.

,, 4. On treaty of Washington.

,, 8. On obstruction to Ballot bill.

,, 15. Defends abolition of purchase.

Sept. 2. At Whitby on the Ballot bill.

,, 26. Presented with freedom of Aberdeen: on Irish agitation for home rule.

Oct. 23. At Blackheath Common on the policy of government.

1872

Feb. 6. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's criticisms on Address.

,, 7. Replies to the criticisms of treaty of Washington.

,, 8. Moves vote of thanks to Speaker Denison on retirement.

,, 9. On office of speaker.

,, 19. Defends appointment of Sir R. Collier.

Mar. 8. Defends appointment of Mr. Harvey to Ewelme.

,, 19. Replies to Sir Charles Dilke's motion for inquiry into Civil List.

,, 20. April 25. On University of Dublin (Tests) bill.

Apr. 12. On England's treaty obligations for intervention in affairs of foreign states.

,, 26. On motion for extending rural franchise.

May 2. On the demand for home rule.

1872

May 13. On United States indirect claims.
,, 14. At King's College, London, in favour of positive religious teaching.
June 14. On denunciation by France of treaty of commerce.
,, 25. On proposal to annex Fiji Islands.
,, 28. On Lords' amendment to Ballot bill making its adoption optional.
July 2. Opposes inquiry into revenues of church of England.
Aug. 1. Pledges government to bring in large measure on local government and taxation.
Nov. 14. At Middle Temple on legal opposition to legal reforms and on arbitration.
,, 28. At American Thanksgiving dinner on good understanding between England and United States.
Dec. 3. At Society of Biblical Archæology on results of excavations in the East.
,, 21. At Liverpool College on unbelief.

1873

Feb. 6. On *Alabama* award.
,, 13. Introduces Irish University bill.
,, 14. On resolution that treaties with foreign powers be submitted to House of Commons.
,, 18. On Mr. Harcourt's motion that the rate of public expenditure is excessive.
Mar. 6. At Croydon on Irish University bill.
,, 7. On relations between England and the colonies.
,, 11. On second reading of Irish University bill.
,, 13. Resignation of ministry.
,, 20. Resumes office. Explains history of crisis.
,, 21. On the three rules of Washington treaty.

1873

Apr. 21. On University Tests (Dublin) bill.
,, 29. On proposal for state purchase of Irish railways.
May 2. On German Emperor's award on Canadian-American boundary.
,, 6. On resolution urging redress of electoral inequalities.
,, 16. On disestablishment of church of England.
,, 26. On *Alabama* award and arbitration.
July 8. On international arbitration.
,, 10. On Judicature bill.
Aug. 15. At Hawarden on school boards.
,, 19. Presides at Welsh National Eisteddfod at Mold: on Welsh language.
Dec. Letter on 'Evolution' in *Contemporary Review*.

1874

Jan. 23. Issues election address.
,, 28. Speech on Blackheath Common on issues before the electors.
,, 31. At Woolwich.
Feb. 'The Shield of Achilles' in *Contemporary Review*.
,, 2. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's speeches at New Cross.
,, 4. Re-elected for Greenwich,—Boord (C.), 6193; Gladstone (L.), 5968; Liardet (C.), 5561; Langley (L.), 5255.
,, 17. Resignation of ministry.
Mar. 5. On the office of speaker.
,, 12. Letter to Lord Granville on leadership.
,, 19. Defends the late dissolution.
,, 20. On Mr. Butt's Home Rule motion.
,, 30. On the Ashantee war.
Apr. 23. On Sir S. Northcote's budget.
,, 24. On proposed vote of censure on late government for dissolution.

1874

May. 'The Reply of Achilles to the envoys of Agamemnon' in *Contemporary Review*.

June. 'Homer's place in history' in *Contemporary Review*.

July. 'The place of Homer in history and in Egyptian chronology' in *Contemporary Review*.

,, 6. Opposes the Scotch Church Patronage bill.

,, 9. Opposes Public Worship Regulation bill, explains his Six Resolutions.

,, 14, 21, 24. Opposes Endowed Schools Act Amendment bill.

Aug. 4. Protests against premature annexation of Fiji.

,, 5. On Public Worship Regulation bill.

Sept. 7-25. Visits Dr. Döllinger in Munich.

Oct. 'Ritualism and Ritual' in *Contemporary Review*.

,, Reviews Miss Yonge's *Life of Bishop Patteson* in *Quarterly Review*.

Nov. *The Vatican Decrees in their bearing on civil allegiance: a political expostulation.*

1875

Jan. 'Speeches of Pope Pius IX.' in *Quarterly Review*.

,, 13. Announces retirement from leadership.

Feb. *Vaticanism: an answer to replies and reproofs.*

Mar. Sells 11 Carlton House Terrace.

Apr. 21. Supports Burials bill.

May. 'Life and Speeches of the Prince Consort' in *Contemporary Review*.

,, 5. In support of Irish Sunday Closing bill.

,, 7. Criticises Sir S. Northcote's budget.

,, 27. Criticises Savings Bank bill.

June 8. On National Debt (Sinking Fund) bill.

July. 'Is the Church of England worth Preserving?' in *Contemporary Review*.

1875

Sept. 9. Lays foundation-stone of King's School, Chester; on English public schools.

,, 14. At Hawarden on mental culture.

Oct. 'Italy and her Church' in *Church Quarterly Review*.

Nov. 11. Distributes prizes to science and art students at Greenwich: on education.

Dec. Latin translation of 'Art thou weary, art thou languid?' in *Contemporary Review*.

1876

Feb. 8. On the Andrassy note and the Crimean war.

,, 16. Presented with freedom of Turner's Company: on city companies.

,, 21. On purchase of Suez Canal shares.

Mar. 'Homerology: I. Apollo' in *Contemporary Review*.

,, 6. On danger of future complications in Egypt.

,, 9. On Royal Titles bill.

23. In support of House of Charity at annual meeting in Soho.

On third reading of Royal Titles bill.

Apr. 'Homerology: II. Hippos, the Horse. III. Diphros, the Chariot,' in *Contemporary Review*.

May 23. On city of London companies.

,, 31. Presides at dinner in celebration 100th anniversary of publication of *Wealth of Nations*.

June. 'Courses of Religious Thought' in *Contemporary Review*.

'A Letter on Newman and Wesley' in *Contemporary Review*.

July. 'Homerology: IV. Athenè. V. Aiolas,' in *Contemporary Review*.

'Lord Macaulay' in *Quarterly Review*.

1876

July. 'Memoir of Norman Macleod, D.D.,' in *Church Quarterly Review.*

,, 6. Distributes prizes at King's College: on knowledge.

,, 13. Distributes prizes at London Hospital Medical College: on medical education.

,, 21. On Turkish Loan of 1854.

,, 31. Defends Crimean war and European concert.

Aug. 17. On cottage gardening at Hawarden.

,, 19. Receives five hundred Lancashire liberals at Hawarden.

Sept. 6. *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*, published.

,, 9. On Blackheath Common on Bulgarian atrocities.

Nov. 'Russian Policy and Deeds in Turkestan' in *Contemporary Review.*

Dec. 'The Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem' in *Contemporary Review.*

Publishes, *The Church of England and Ritualism.*

A Biographical Sketch of Lord Lyttelton.

Homeric Synchronism: an Inquiry into the Time and place of Homer.

1877

Jan. 'Life of the Prince Consort' in *Church Quarterly Review.*

,, 16. At Hawarden on the Turks, the Greeks, and the Slavs.

,, 22. At Bath railway station on Eastern Question.

,, 27. At Taunton railway station on duty of England in Near East.

Feb. 3. Address to boys of Marlborough College on value of simple habits.

,, 8. On Eastern Question.

,, 16. Attacks government's Turkish policy.

,, 28. In support of Servian Relief Fund at Grosvenor House.

Mar. 'On the influence of authority in matters of opinion' in *Nineteenth Century.*

Lessons in Massacre published.

,, 22. On preaching at the City Temple.

,, 23. Supports Mr. Fawcett's resolution that Turkish promises without guarantees are useless.

Apr. 24. On a motion in favour of an Irish parliament.

,, 30. Gives notice of five resolutions—on the Eastern Question.

May. 'Montenegro: a sketch' in *Nineteenth Century.*

,, 7. Moves first of his resolutions.

,, 12. On ceramic art at the Cymmodorian Society, London Institution.

,, 14. Closes debate on his first resolution.

,, 31. At Birmingham on the Eastern Question.

June 1. At Bristol Street Board School, Birmingham, on Ireland and Irish representatives. Presented with address by the City: on municipal life.

,, 4. Supports amendment to Universities bill, providing that holy orders shall not be a condition of holding any headship or fellowship.

,, 30. Opens Caxton Exhibition: on the work of Caxton.

July. 'Rejoinder on authority in matters of opinion' in *Nineteenth Century.*

'Piracy in Borneo and the Operations of July 1849' in *Contemporary Review.*

,, 13. At Plymouth and Exeter on liberal party and Eastern Question.

,, 16. On behalf of Bosnian refugees at Willis's Rooms.

,, 20. On Irish demand for pardon of Fenian convicts.

1877

Aug. 'Aggression on Egypt and Freedom in the East' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 4, 18, 20. Receives deputations of 5200 liberals at Hawarden on Eastern Question.
Sept. 19. At Hawarden Grammar School on education.
,, 27. At University College, Nottingham, on higher education. At Alexandra Hall on Eastern Question.
Oct. 'The colour sense' in *Nineteenth Century*.
'The Dominions of the Odysseus and the island group of the Odyssey' in *Macmillan's Magazine*.
,, 17. Visits Ireland.
Nov. 'The County Franchise and Mr. Lowe thereon' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 7. Presented with freedom of Dublin: on Irish questions. Entertained at luncheon by corporation of Dublin: on Irish municipalities.
,, 12. At Holyhead on Eastern Question.
,, 15. Elected Rector of Glasgow University,—Mr. Gladstone, 1153; Sir Stafford Northcote, 609.
,, 23. At Hawarden on Russians, Turks, and Bulgarians.

1878

Jan. 'The Life of the Prince Consort' in *Church Quarterly Review*. 'Last words on the County Franchise' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 17. Comments on Sir S. Northcote's explanation of the government's Eastern policy.
,, 30. At Corn Exchange, Oxford, on the vote of credit for six millions. At Palmerston Club dinner on Canning, Palmerston, and liberal party.

1878

Feb. 'The Peace to Come' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 4. On Mr. Forster's amendment against vote of credit.
Mar. 'The Paths of Honour and of Shame' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 19. On Indian press law.
,, 23. Receives deputation of Greenwich liberals: on unpopularity of economy in public expenditure.
,, 28. To deputation from Leeds on the Eastern Question.
Apr. 'The Iris of Homer: and the relation of Genesis ix. 11-17' in *Contemporary Review*.
,, 1. Supports Irish Sunday Closing bill.
,, 2. On Vaccination Law (Penalties) bill.
,, 5. On government and the Berlin Congress.
,, 8. On government's Eastern policy in debate on calling out army reserves.
,, 18. At Memorial Hall on Eastern Question at conference of 400 London Nonconformist ministers.
May 21. Protests against use of Indian troops in Europe without consent of parliament.
,, 23. Receives deputation of Scotch Presbyterian ministers: on the Eastern Question.
,, 27. Protests against despatch of Indian contingent to Malta.
June. 'Liberty in the East and West' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 13. On treaties of 1856 and 1871.
,, 18. On a motion to appoint select committee on Scotch Church Patronage Act, 1874.
July. Contributes paper to symposium,—'Is the popular judgment of politics more just than that of the

1878

higher orders?' in *Nineteenth Century*.

July 6. On Homer at Eton.
,, 11. In London on spendthrift administration of charity.
,, 15. Supports Irish Intermediate Education bill.
,, 20. At Bermondsey on Anglo-Turkish convention.
,, 23. Moves address that proceedings under Indian Vernacular Press Act be reported to parliament.
,, 30. Criticises action of British plenipotentiaries at Berlin Congress.
Aug. 6. Criticises Sir S. Northcote's finance.
,, 15. On art-labour at Hawarden.
Sept. 'England's Mission' in *Nineteenth Century*.
Oct. 'The Sixteenth Century arraigned before the Nineteenth: a Study on the Reformation' in *Contemporary Review*.
,, 1-7. Visits Isle of Man.
,, 31. At Rhyl on the political situation.
Nov. 'Electoral Facts' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 11. At Buckley on books.
,, 30. At Greenwich on liberal organisation. At Woolwich on Afghan war.
Dec. 10. On Afghan war and policy.
,, 16. Protests against charging Indian revenues with expenses of Afghan war. Publishes a Literary Primer on *Homer*.

1879

Jan. 'The Friends and Foes of Russia' in *Nineteenth Century*.
Feb. 10. At Hawarden on Life and Labours of Dr. Hook.
Mar. 'On Epithets of Movement in Homer' in *Nineteenth Century*.
Apr. 21. At Mentmore on liberal party and foreign policy.
,, 28. On increase in national expenditure.

1879

May. 'Probability as the Guide of Conduct' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 2. In favour of enabling Irish tenants to purchase their holdings.
,, 5. In explanation and defence of his financial policy in 1860.
,, 13. Opposes resolution protesting against government's abuse of prerogative of the crown.
,, 19. On church home missions at Willis's Rooms.
June. 'Greece and the Treaty of Berlin' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 11. On education at Mill Hill School.
,, 12. On financial condition of India.
,, 14. On tendency of political life to mar a literary career at Savage Club.
,, 20. On condition of Cyprus under English administration.
,, 24. Letter to Principal Rainy on Scotch disestablishment.
July. 'The Evangelical Movement, its Parentage, Progress, and Issue' in *British Quarterly Review*.
,, 5. On Homer at Eton College.
,, 22. On unfulfilled stipulations of Berlin treaty.
Aug. 'The Country and the Government' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 11. Opens Fine Art Exhibition, Chester: on art and manufacture.
,, 19. At Chester on government's foreign policy.
,, 21. At St. Pancras workhouse.
,, 28. At Hawarden on garden cultivation.
Sept. 14 Oct. 21. Travelling in Bavaria and Italy.
Oct. 'The Olympian System *versus* the Solar Theory' in *Nineteenth Century*.
Nov. 3. To students at Wellington College on knowledge.

1879

Nov. 25. At Music Hall, Edinburgh, on issues before the electors.
,, 26. At Dalkeith on domestic questions.
,, 27. At West Calder on right principles of foreign policy.
,, 29. At Edinburgh on tory finance. In Waverley Market on Balkan principalities.
Dec. 5. Inaugural address at Glasgow University. In St. Andrew's Hall on government's European, Indian, and South African policies.
Publishes *Gleanings of Past Years*, 1843-79, in seven volumes.

1880

Feb. 'Free trade, railways and the growth of commerce,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 27. At St. Pancras on obstruction, liberal unity and errors of government.
,, 27. On rules dealing with obstruction.
Mar. 'Russia and England' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 5. On motion in favour of local option.
,, 11. Issues address to electors of Midlothian.
,, 15. Criticises budget.
,, 17. At Music Hall, Edinburgh, on government's eastern policy.
,, 18. At Corstorphine on Anglo-Turkish convention.
,, 18. At Ratho on neglect of domestic legislation.
,, 19. At Davidson's Mains on indictment of the government. At Dalkeith on the government and class interests.
,, 20. At Juniper Green, and at Balerno, replies to tory criticism of liberal party. At Midcalder on abridgment of rights of parliament.

1880

Mar. 22. At Gilmerton on church disestablishment. At Loanhead on the eastern policy of liberal and tory parties.
,, 23. At Gorebridge and at Pathhead.
,, 25. At Penicuik on Cyprus.
,, 30. At Stow on finance.
Apr. 'Religion, Achaian and Semitic,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 2. At West Calder on liberal record and shortcomings of the government.
,, 5. Elected for Midlothian: Mr. Gladstone, 1579; Lord Dalkeith, 1368.
,, 7. Returns to Hawarden.
,, 28. Second administration formed.
May. Anonymous article, 'The Conservative Collapse,' in *Fortnightly Review*.
,, 8. Returned unopposed for Midlothian.
,, 11. Publication of correspondence with Count Karolyi, Austrian ambassador.
,, 16. Receives deputation of farmers on agricultural reform.
,, 20. On government's Turkish policy.
,, 21. Moves reference to committee of Mr. Bradlaugh's claim to take his seat in parliament.
,, 25. On South African federation.
June 1. On government's policy regarding Cyprus.
,, 10. Introduces supplementary budget.
,, 16. On reduction of European armaments.
,, 18. On resolution in favour of local option. Moves second reading of Savings Banks bill.
,, 22. On Resolution that Mr. Bradlaugh be allowed to make a declaration.
July 1. On Mr. Bradlaugh's case.
,, 5, 26. On Compensation for Disturbances (Ireland) bill.

1880

July 23. Explains government's policy regarding Armenia.
,, 30-Aug. 9. Confined to room by serious illness.
Aug. 26-Sept. 4. Makes sea trip in the *Grantully Castle* round England and Scotland.
Sept. 4. On government's Turkish policy.
Nov. 9. At lord mayor's banquet on Ireland and foreign and colonial questions.

1881

Jan. 6. On Ireland.
,, 21. On annexation of Transvaal.
,, 28. On Irish Protection of Person and Property bill.
Feb. 3. Brings in closure resolution.
,, 23. Falls in garden at Downing Street.
Mar. 15. Moves vote of condolence on assassination of Alexander II.
,, 16. On grant in aid of India for expenses of Afghan war.
,, 28. On county government and local taxation.
Apr. 4. Introduces budget.
,, 7. Brings in Land Law (Ireland) bill.
,, 26 and 27. On Mr. Bradlaugh's case.
May 2. Resigns personal trusteeship of British Museum.
,, 4. Supports Welsh Sunday Closing bill.
,, 5. Supports vote of thanks on military operations in Afghanistan.
,, 9. Tribute to Lord Beaconsfield.
,, 16. On second reading of Irish Land bill.
June 10. On the law of entail.
,, 24. On Anglo-Turkish convention.
July 25. On vote of censure on Transvaal.
,, 29. On third reading of Irish Land bill.

1881

Aug. 6. At Mansion House on fifteen months' administration.
,, 18. On Mr. Parnell's vote of censure on the Irish executive.
Oct. 7. Presented with an address by corporation of Leeds: on land and 'fair trade.' At banquet in Old Cloth Hall on Ireland.
,, 8. Presented with address by Leeds Chamber of Commerce: on free trade. Mass meeting of 25,000 persons in Old Cloth Hall on foreign and colonial policy.
,, 13. Presented with address by city corporation at Guildhall: on Ireland and arrest of Mr. Parnell.
,, 27. At Knowsley on the aims of the Irish policy.
Nov. 9. At lord mayor's banquet on government's Irish policy and parliamentary procedure.

1882

Jan. 12. At Hawarden on agriculture.
,, 31. On local taxation to deputation from chambers of agriculture.
Feb. 7. On Mr. Bradlaugh's claim.
,, 9. On home rule amendment to address.
,, 16. On the Irish demand for home rule.
,, 20. Moves first of new procedure rules.
,, 21. On local taxation.
,, 21 and 22. On Mr. Bradlaugh's case.
,, 27. Meeting of liberal party at Downing Street. On House of Lords' committee to inquire into Irish Land Act.
,, 27. Moves resolution declaring parliamentary inquiry into Land Act injurious to interests of good government.

1882

Mar. 3. On persecution of Jews in Russia.
,, 6. Supports resolution for legislation on parliamentary oaths.
,, 10. On proposed state acquisition of Irish railways.
,, 17. On British North Borneo Company's charter.
,, 21. On parliamentary reform.
,, 23. On grant to Duke of Albany.
,, 30. On closure resolution.
,, 31. On inquiry into ecclesiastical commission.
Apr. 17. Opposes motion for release of Cetewayo.
,, 18. On diplomatic communications with Vatican.
,, 24. Introduces budget.
,, 26. On the Irish Land Act Amendment bill.
May 2. Statement on Irish policy, announces release of 'suspects,' and resignation of Mr. Forster.
,, 4. On Mr. Forster's resignation.
,, 8. Moves adjournment of the House on assassination of Lord F. Cavendish and Mr. Burke.
,, 15. Brings in Arrears of Rent (Ireland) bill.
,, 19. On second reading of Prevention of Crime (Ireland) bill.
,, 22. On Arrears bill.
,, 24. On Prevention of Crime bill.
,, 26-June 1. On government's Egyptian policy.
June 14. On Egyptian crisis.
,, 17. On Mr. Bright's resignation.
July 12. On bombardment of Alexandria.
,, 21. On third reading of Arrears bill.
,, 24. Asks for vote of credit for £2,300,000.
,, 27. Concludes debate on vote of credit.
,, 28. On national expenditure.
Aug. 8. On Lords' amendments to Arrears bill.
,, 9. On suspension of Irish members, July 1.

1882

Aug. 16. On events leading to Egyptian war.
Oct. 25-31, and Dec. 1. On twelve new rules of procedure.
,, 26. Moves vote of thanks to forces engaged in Egyptian campaign.
Nov. 24. Opposes demand for select committee on release of Mr. Parnell.
Dec. 13. Celebrates political jubilee.

1883

Jan. 6-16. Suffers from sleeplessness at Hawarden.
,, 17. Leaves England for south of France.
Mar. 2. Returns to London.
,, 14. On Irish Land Law (1881) Amendment bill.
,, 16. On Boer invasion of Bechuanaland.
Apr. 3. On Channel tunnel.
,, 6. On increase in national expenditure.
,, 17. On local taxation.
,, 19. On Lords Alcester and Wolseley's annuity bills.
,, 26. On Parliamentary Oaths Act (1866) Amendment bill.
May 2. At National Liberal club on conservative legacy of 1880 and work of liberal administration, 1880-1883.
,, 7. On Contagious Diseases Acts.
,, 25. On reforms in Turkey.
,, 29. Meeting of liberal party at foreign office: on state of public business.
June 2. At Stafford House: tribute to Garibaldi.
,, 12. On revision of purchase clauses of Land Act.
,, 23. On withdrawal of provisional agreement for second Suez canal.
July 27. On India and payment for Egyptian campaign.
,, 30. On future negotiations with Suez canal company.
Aug. 6. On government's Transvaal and Zululand policies.

1883

Aug. 6-7. On British occupation of Egypt.
,, 18. Protests against violent speeches of Irish members.
,, 21. On work of the session.
Sept. Italian translation of Cowper's hymn: 'Hark my soul! It is the Lord,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 8-21. In *Pembroke Castle* round coast of Scotland to Norway and Copenhagen.
,, 13. At Kirkwall: on changes during half century of his political life.
,, 18. Entertains the Emperor and Empress of Russia, the King and Queen of Denmark, at dinner on board *Pembroke Castle* in Copenhagen harbour.
Dec. 22. At Hawarden, to deputation of liberal working men on reform of the franchise.

1884

Jan. 5. At Hawarden on condition of agriculture.
,, 31. Receives deputations from Leeds conference, etc., on Franchise bill.
Feb. 11 and 21. On Mr. Bradlaugh's attempt to take the oath.
,, 12. On Egyptian and Soudan policy in reply to vote of censure.
,, 13. On re-establishment of grand committees.
,, 25. Moves resolution of thanks to Speaker Brand on his retirement.
,, 28. Explains provisions of Representation of the People (Franchise) bill.
Mar. 3. In defence of retention of Suakin.
,, 6. On government's Egyptian policy.
,, 10-19. Confined to his room, by a chill.
,, 19 to April 7. Recuperates at Coombe Warren.
,, 31. On death of Duke of Albany.

1884

Apr. 3. On General Gordon's mission in Soudan.
,, 7. On second reading of Franchise bill.
May 12. On vote of censure regarding General Gordon.
,, 27. On Egyptian financial affairs.
June 10. Opposes amendment to Franchise bill granting suffrage to women.
,, 23. On terms of agreement with France on Egypt.
,, 26. On third reading of Franchise bill.
July 8. On second reading of London Government bill.
,, 10. Meeting of the liberal party: on rejection of Franchise bill by House of Lords.
,, 11. On negotiations with Lord Cairns on Franchise bill.
,, 18. At Eighty club on relation of politics of the past to politics of the future.
Aug. 2. On failure of conference on Egyptian finance.
,, 11. On Lord Northbrook's mission to Egypt.
,, 30. At Corn Exchange, Edinburgh, on Lords and Franchise bill.
Sept. 1. At Corn Exchange, Edinburgh, in defence of his administration.
,, 2. In Waverley Market on demand of Lords for dissolution.
,, 26. Returns to Hawarden.
Oct. 16. Cuts first sod on Wirral railway: on railway enterprise.
,, 23. On Franchise bill.
,, 28. Defends Lord Spencer's Irish administration.
Nov. 4. Lays foundation stone of National Liberal club: on liberal administrations of past half century.
,, 6 and 10. On second reading of Franchise bill.
,, 21. On Mr. Labouchere's motion for reform of House of Lords.
Dec. 1. Brings in Redistribution bill.

1884

Dec. 4. On second reading of Redistribution bill.

1885

Feb. 23. On vote of censure on Soudan policy.

Mar. 26. Moves ratification of Egyptian financial agreement.

Apr. 9. Announces occupation of Penjdeh by Russians.

,, 16. In defence of Egyptian Loan bill.

,, 21. Asks for vote of credit for war preparations.

,, 27. On Soudan and Afghanistan.

May 4. Announces agreement with Russia on Afghan boundary dispute.

,, 14. On Princess Beatrice's dowry.

June 8. Defends increase of duties on beer and spirits.

,, 9. Resignation of government.

,, 24. Reads correspondence on crisis.[4]

July 6. On legislation on parliamentary oaths.

,, 7. On intentions of the new government.

Aug. 8-Sept. 1. In Norway.

Sept. 17. Issues address to Midlothian electors.

Nov. 'Dawn of Creation and of Worship,' in *Nineteenth Century*.

,, 9. At Albert Hall, Edinburgh, on proposals of Irish party.

,, 11. At Free Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, on disestablishment.

,, 17. At West Calder on Ireland, foreign policy, and free trade.

,, 21. At Dalkeith on finance and land reform.

,, 23. At inauguration of Market Cross, Edinburgh: on history of the cross.

,, 24. At Music Hall, Edinburgh, on tory tactics and Mr. Parnell's charges.

,, 27. Elected for Midlothian: Mr. Gladstone, 7879; Mr. Dalrymple, 3248.

1886

Jan. 'Proem to Genesis: a Plea for a Fair Trial,' in *Nineteenth Century*.

,, 21. On government's policy in India, the Near East, and Ireland.

,, 26. In support of amendment for allotments.

Feb. 3. Third administration formed.

,, 4. Issues address to electors of Midlothian.

,, 10. Returned unopposed for Midlothian.

,, 22. On comparative taxation of England and Ireland. On annexation of Burmah.

,, 23. On Ireland's contribution to imperial revenue.

Mar. 4. On condition of Ireland.

,, 6-12. Confined to his room by a cold.

Apr. 6. On death of Mr. W. E. Forster.

,, 8. Brings in Government of Ireland (Home Rule) bill.

,, 13. On first reading of Home Rule bill.

,, 16. Explains provisions of Irish Land Purchase bill.

May 1. Issues address to electors of Midlothian on Home Rule bill.

,, 10. Moves second reading of Home Rule bill.

,, 27. Meeting of liberal party at the foreign office: on the Home Rule bill.

,, 28. Explains intentions regarding the Home Rule bill.

June 7-8. Concludes debate on Home Rule bill.

,, 10. Announces dissolution of parliament.

,, 14. Issues address to electors of Midlothian.

,, 18. At Music Hall, Edinburgh, on home rule.

,, 21. At Music Hall, Edinburgh, on home rule.

,, 22. At Glasgow, on home rule.

,, 25. At Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on home rule.

,, 28. At Liverpool, on Ulster and home rule.

1886

July 2. Returned unopposed for Midlothian and Leith.
,, 20. Resignation of third administration.
Aug. 19-24. On government's Irish policy.
,, 25. Leaves England for Bavaria.
,, 28. '*The Irish Question* (1) *History of an Idea* (2) *Lessons of the Election*,' published.
Sept. 19. Returns to London.
,, 20. On Tenants Relief (Ireland) bill.
Oct. 4. At Hawarden. Receives address signed by 400,000 women of Ireland: on home rule.

1887

Jan. '*Locksley Hall* and the Jubilee,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 27. Tribute to memory of Lord Iddesleigh.
., 27. On Lord Randolph Churchill's retirement and Ireland.
Feb. 'Notes and Queries on the Irish Demand,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
Mar. 'The Greater Gods of Olympus: (1) Poseidon,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
., 17. To the liberal members for Yorkshire: on home rule.
,, 24. On the exaction of excessive rents.
,, 29. On Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) bill.
Apr. 'The History of 1852-60 and Greville's Latest Journals,' in *English Historical Review*.
,, 18. On second reading of Criminal Law Amendment bill.
., 19. At Eighty club on liberal unionist grammar of dissent.
., 25. Criticises Mr. Goschen's budget.
May 'The Greater Gods of Olympus: (2) Apollo,' in *Nineteenth Century*.

1887

May 5. Moves for select committee to inquire into the *Times* articles on 'Parnellism and Crime.'
,, 11. At Dr. Parker's house on Ireland.
,, 31. On Crimes bill at Hawarden.
June Reviews Mr. Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 'The Great Olympian Sedition,' in *Contemporary Review*.
,, 4. At Swansea, on Welsh nationality, Welsh grievances, and the Irish Crimes bill.
,, 6. At Singleton Abbey on home rule and retention of Irish members.
,, 7. At Cardiff on home rule.
July. 'The Greater Gods of Olympus: (3) Athene,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 2. To the liberal members for Durham on Lord Hartington's Irish record.
,, 7. Moves rejection of Irish Criminal Law Amendment bill.
,, 9. Presented at Dollis Hill with address signed by 10,689 citizens of New York.
,, 14. On second reading of the Irish Land bill.
,, 16. At National Liberal club: on Ireland and home rule movement in Scotland and Wales.
,, 29. At Memorial Hall on the lessons of bye-elections.
Aug. 'Mr. Lecky and Political Morality,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 16. Lays first cylinder of railway bridge over the Dee: on railway enterprise and the Channel tunnel.
,, 25. On proclamation of Irish land league.
,, 30. At Hawarden on Queen Victoria's reign.
Sept. 'Electoral Facts of 1887,' in *Nineteenth Century*.

1887

Sept. 12. On riot at Mitchelstown, Ireland.
Oct. 'Ingram's History of the Irish Union,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 4. At Hawarden on the absolutist methods of government.
,, 18. At National Liberal Federation, Nottingham, on conduct of Irish police.
,, 19. At Skating Rink, Nottingham, on home rule.
,, 20. At Drill Hall, Derby, on Ireland.
Nov. 'An Olive Branch from America,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
Dec. 27. At Dover, on free trade and Irish Crimes Act.
,, 28. Leaves England for Italy.

1888

Jan. 'A reply to Dr. Ingram, in *Westminster Review*.
Feb. 'The Homeric Hera,' in *Contemporary Review*.
,, 8. Returns to London.
,, 17. On coercion in Ireland.
Mar. 'Further Notes and Queries on the Irish Demand,' in *Contemporary Review*.
,, 23. On perpetual pensions.
Apr. 9. On the budget.
,, 11. At National Liberal Club on the budget and Local Government bill.
,, 23. Moves an amendment in favour of equalising the death duties on real and personal property.
,, 25. On second reading of County Government (Ireland) bill.
May. 'Robert Elsmere, and the Battle of Belief,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, A reply to Colonel Ingersoll on 'Christianity,' in *North American Review*.
,, 1. On government control of railways.
,, 2. Opens Gladstone library at National Liberal club: on books.

1888

May 9. At Memorial Hall on Irish question.
,, 26. At Hawarden condemns licensing clauses of Local Government bill.
,, 30. Receives deputation of 1500 Lancashire liberals at Hawarden.
June 18. On death of German Emperor.
,, 26. Condemns administration of Irish criminal law.
,, 27. On Channel Tunnel bill.
,, 30. At Hampstead on Ireland and the bye-elections.
July. 'The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 6. On payment of members.
,, 18. To liberal members for Northumberland and Cumberland on Parnell commission and retention of Irish members.
,, 23. On second reading of Parnell Commission bill.
,, 25. Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone presented with their portraits on entering on fiftieth year of married life.
,, 30. On composition of Parnell commission.
Aug. 20. Receives deputation of 1500 liberals at Hawarden: on conservative government of Ireland.
,, 23. At Hawarden on spade husbandry and the cultivation of fruit.
Sept. 'Mr. Forster and Ireland,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 4. At Wrexham on Irish and Welsh home rule.
,, 4. At the Eisteddfod on English feeling towards Wales.
Nov. 'Queen Elizabeth and the Church of England,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 5. At Town Hall, Birmingham, on liberal unionists and one man one vote.
,, 6. To deputation at Birmingham on labour representation and payment of members.

1888

Nov. 7. At Bingley Hall, Birmingham, on Irish question.
,, 8. To deputation of Birmingham Irish National club on Irish grievances.
,, 19. On Irish Land Purchase bill.
Dec. 3. On Mr. Balfour's administration of Ireland.
,, 15. At Limehouse Town Hall on necessary English reforms and the Irish question.
,, 17. On English occupation of Suakin.
.. 19. Leaves England for Naples.

1889

Jan. 'Daniel O'Connell,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
Feb. Reviews *Divorce* by Margaret Lee in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 20. Returns to London.
Mar. 1. On conciliatory measures in administration of Ireland.
,, 29. On death of John Bright.
Apr. Reviews *For the Right* in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 4. On £21,000,000 for naval defence.
,, 9. On Scotch home rule.
May. 'Italy in 1888-89,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 15. On second reading of Welsh Education bill.
.. 16. Moves amendment to Mr. Goschen's proposed death duties on estates above £10,000.
June 5. At Southampton on lessons of the bye-elections.
,, 7. At Romsey on Lord Palmerston.
,, 8. At Weymouth on shorter parliaments and Ireland.
,, 10. At Torquay on Ireland.
.. 11. At Falmouth and Redruth on Ireland.
,, 12. At Truro, St. Austell, and Bodmin on Ireland, one man one vote, the death duties, etc.

1889

June 14. At Launceston on dissentient liberals.
,, 14. At Drill Hall, Plymouth, on home rule.
,, 17. At Shaftesbury and Gillingham on the agricultural labourer.
July. 'Plain Speaking on the Irish Union,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 6. Presented with freedom of Cardiff: on free trade; on foreign opinion of English rule in Ireland.
,, 25. Golden wedding celebrated in London.
,, 25. Speech on royal grants.
Aug. 'Phœnician Affinities of Ithaca,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 22. At Hawarden on cottage gardens and fruit culture.
,, 26. Celebration of golden wedding at Hawarden.
Sept. 7. Entertained in Paris by Society of Political Economy.
,, 23. At Hawarden on dock strike and bimetallism.
,, 'The Triple Alliance and Italy's Place in it,' by Outidanos, in *Contemporary Review*.
Oct. Reviews *Journal de Marie Bashkirtseff* in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 23. At Southport on Ireland.
.. 26. Opens literary institute at Saltney, Chester.
Nov. 'The English Church under Henry the Eighth,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 'The Question of Divorce,' in *North American Review*.
Dec. Reviews *Memorials of a Southern Planter* in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 2. At Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on liberal unionists and foreign policy.
,, 3. In Free Trade Hall on government of Ireland.
,, 4. At luncheon at Town Hall on city of Manchester.

1890

Jan. 'A Defence of Free Trade,' in *North American Review*.

,, 'The Melbourne Government: its Acts and Persons,' in *Nineteenth Century*.

,, 9. At Hawarden on the effect of free trade on agriculture.

,, 22. At Chester on Ireland.

Feb. 5. At Oxford Union on vestiges of Assyrian mythology in Homer.

,, 11. On motion declaring publication by *Times* of forged Parnell letter to be breach of privilege.

Mar. 'On Books and the Housing of Them,' in *Nineteenth Century*.

,, 3. On report of Parnell commission.

,, 24. At National Liberal club on report of Parnell commission.

,, 26. At Guy's Hospital on the medical profession.

Apr. 24. On second reading of Purchase of Land (Ireland) bill.

May 2. On disestablishment of church of Scotland.

,, 12. On free trade at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly.

,, 15. On Local Taxation Duties bill.

,, 16. At Norwich on Parnell commission, land purchase and licensing question.

,, 17. At Lowestoft on Siberian atrocities and the agricultural labourer.

Apr. 27. Receives 10,000 liberals at Hawarden: on Mitchelstown, Irish Land bill, and Licensing bill.

June 5. On Channel Tunnel bill.

,, 13. On Local Taxation Duties bill.

,, 18. To depositors in railways' savings banks: on thrift.

July 17. At Burlington School, London, on the education of women.

1890

July 24. On Anglo-German Agreement bill.

,, 30. To Wesleyans at National Liberal club on Maltese marriage question, and Ireland.

Aug. 21. At Hawarden on cottage gardening and fruit farming.

,, 30. 'Dr. Döllinger's Posthumous Remains,' in the *Speaker*.

Sept. 12. At Dee iron works on industrial progress.

Oct. 21. At Corn Exchange, Edinburgh, on government's Irish administration.

,, 23. At West Calder on condition of working classes and Ireland.

,, 25. At Dalkeith on home rule for Scotland and Ireland.

,, 27. At Music Hall, Edinburgh, on retention of Irish members, procedure and obstruction.

,, 29. At Dundee on free trade and the McKinley tariff. Opens Victorian Art Gallery: on appreciation of beauty.

Nov. 'Mr. Carnegie's Gospel of Wealth,' in *Nineteenth Century*.

,, 24. Letter to Mr. Morley on Mr. Parnell and leadership of Irish party.

Dec. 1. Publishes reply to Mr. Parnell's manifesto to Irish people.

,, 2. On Purchase of Land (Ireland) bill.

,, 11. At Retford on Mr. Parnell and the home rule cause.

Publishes *'The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, a reprint of articles in *Good Words*.

Landmarks of Homeric Study, together with an Essay on the Points of Contact between the Assyrian Tablets and the Homeric Text.

1891

Jan. 27. Supports motion to expunge from journals of the House the Bradlaugh resolution (1881).

Feb. 'Professor Huxley and the Swine-Miracle,' in *Nineteenth Century*.

,, 4. Moves second reading of Religious Disabilities Removal bill.

,, 13. Opens free library in St. Martin's Lane: on free libraries.

,, 16. Condemns action of Irish executive in Tipperary trials.

,, 20. On disestablishment of church in Wales.

,, 27. On taxation of land.

March 3. On registration reform.

,, 14. At Eton College on Homeric Artemis.

,, 17. At Hastings on Mr. Goschen's finance, Irish policy, and the career of Mr. Parnell.

May. 'A Memoir of John Murray,' in *Murray's Magazine*.

June 19. At St. James's Hall, at jubilee of Colonial Bishoprics Fund, on development of colonial church.

July 4. Death of W. H. Gladstone.

,, 15. At Hawarden on fifty years of progress.

Sept. 'Electoral Facts, No. III.,' in *Nineteenth Century*.

Oct. 'On the Ancient Beliefs in a Future State,' in *Nineteenth Century*.

,, 1. At jubilee of Glenalmond College on study of nature and the clerical profession.

,, 2. At Newcastle on the liberal programme.

Nov. 3. At Newcastle on local self-government and freedom of trade.

,, 28. At Wirral on home rule. At Sunlight Soap works on profit-sharing and co-operation.

Dec. 11. At Holborn Restaurant to conference of labourers on rural reforms.

,, 15. Leaves London for Biarritz.

1892

Feb.-May. 'On the Olympian Religion,' in *North American Review*.

,, 29. Returns to London.

March 3. Opposes grant of £20,000 for survey of Uganda railway.

,, 16. On Welsh Land Tenure bill.

,, 24. On Small Agricultural Holdings bill.

,, 28. On Indian Councils Act (1861) Amendment bill.

April Reviews *The Platform, its Rise and Progress*, in *Nineteenth Century*.

,, 28. On Church Discipline (Immorality) bill.

May 24. On Local Government (Ireland) bill.

,, 31. At Memorial Hall on London government.

June. 'Did Dante Study in Oxford?' in *Nineteenth Century*.

,, 5. At Dalkeith on Scotch home rule and disestablishment.

,, 16. Receives deputation from London trades council on Eight Hours bill.

,, 18. To nonconformists at Clapham on Ulster and home rule.

,, 24. Issues address to electors of Midlothian.

,, 25. Struck in the eye by piece of gingerbread in Chester. At Liberal club on the general election, the appeal to religious bigotry, and disestablishment.

,, 30. At Edinburgh Music Hall on Lord Salisbury's manifesto, home rule, and retention of Irish members.

July 2. At Glasgow on Orangeism and home rule.

,, 4. At Gorebridge on labour questions.

,, 6. At Corstorphine on government's record.

,, 7. At West Calder on protection, the Lords, labour and home rule.

,, 11. At Penicuik on conservative responsibility for recent wars, finance, disestab-

1892

lishment, and Irish question.

July 13. Elected for Midlothian: Mr. Gladstone, 5845; Colonel Wauchope, 5155.

Aug. 9. On vote of want of confidence.

,, 15. Fourth administration formed.

,, 24. Returned unopposed for Midlothian.

,, 29. Knocked down by heifer in Hawarden Park.

Sept. 5. A paper on Archaic Greece and the East read before Congress of Orientalists.

,, 12. At Carnarvon on case of Wales.

Oct. 'A Vindication of Home Rule: a Reply to the Duke of Argyll,' in *North American Review*.

,, 22. Cuts first sod of the new Cheshire railway: on migration of population and mineral produce of Wales.4

,, 24. Delivers Romanes lecture at Oxford on History of Universities.

Dec. 3. Presented with freedom of Liverpool: on history of Liverpool and Manchester ship canal.

,, 21. Leaves England for Biarritz.

1893

Jan. 10. Returns to England.

,, 31. Replies to Mr. Balfour's criticisms on the address.

Feb. 3. On Mr. Labouchere's amendment in favour of evacuation of Uganda.

Feb. 8. On amendment praying for immediate legislation for agricultural labourers.

,, 11. On motion for restriction of alien immigration.

,, 13. Brings in Government of Ireland (Home Rule) bill.

,, 23. On motion for international monetary conference.

Mar. 3. Receives deputation from the miners' federation on Eight Hours bill.

1893

Mar. 20. On Sir Gerald Portal's mission to Uganda.

,, 27. Meeting of the liberal party at foreign office: on programme for session.

,, 27. On Mr. Balfour's motion censuring action of Irish executive.

,, 28. Receives deputations from Belfast manufacturers and city of London merchants protesting against home rule.

Apr. 6. Moves second reading of Home Rule bill.

,, 19. Receives a deputation from the miners' National Union on Eight Hours bill.

,, 21. Replies to criticisms on Home Rule bill.

May 1. On the occupation of Egypt.

,, 2. Receives a deputation of the Mining Association in opposition to Eight Hours bill.

,, 3. On second reading of Miners' Eight Hours bill.

,, 11. Replies to Mr. Chamberlain's speech on first clause of Home Rule bill.

,, 23. Opens Hawarden institute: on the working classes.

,, 29. At Chester on Home Rule bill.

June 'Some Eton Translations,' in *Contemporary Review*.

,, 16. On arbitration between England and United States.

,, 22. Statement regarding the financial clauses of Home Rule bill.

,, 28. Moves resolution for closing debate on committee stage of Home Rule bill.

July 12. Announces government's decision regarding the retention of Irish members at Westminster.

,, 14. Moves address of congratulation on marriage of Duke of York.

,, 21. Moves a new clause to Home Rule bill regulating financial relations.

1893

Aug. 5. At Agricultural Hall, Islington, on industry and art.
,, 30. Moves third reading of Home Rule bill.
Sept. 27. At Edinburgh on House of Lords and the Home Rule bill.
Nov. 9. On Matabeleland and the chartered company.
Dec. 19. On naval policy of the government.

1894

Jan. 13. Leaves England for Biarritz.
Feb. 10. Returns to England.
Mar. 1. On the Lords' amendments to Parish Councils bill.
,, 3. Resigns the premiership.
,, 7. Confined to bed by severe cold.
,, 17. At Brighton. Letter to Sir John Cowan — his farewell to parliamentary life.
May 'The Love Odes of Horace five specimens,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 3. At Prince's Hall on life and work of Sir Andrew Clark.
,, 24. Right eye operated on for cataract.
July 7. Announces decision not to seek re-election to parliament.
Aug. 'The Place of Heresy and Schism in the Modern Christian Church,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 14. On cottage gardening at Hawarden.
,, 16. Receives deputation of 1500 liberals from Torquay at Hawarden.
Sept. 'The True and False Conception of the Atonement,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
Dec. 29. Receives deputation from the Armenian national church at Hawarden.

1895

Jan. 7. Presented with an album by Irish-Americans: in favour of Irish unity.
,, 8. Leaves England for south of France.
March Publishes *The Psalter with a concordance*.
,, 'The Lord's Day,' in *Church Monthly*; concluded in April number.
,, 23. Returns to England from France.
,, 25. At Hawarden to a deputation of Leeds and Huddersfield liberal clubs: on English people and political power, and on advantages of libraries.
June 12-24. Cruise in *Tantallon Castle* to Hamburg, Copenhagen, and Kiel.
July 1. Farewell letter to Midlothian constituents.
Aug. 5. At Hawarden on small holdings and his old age.
,, 6. At Chester on Armenian question.
Nov. 'Bishop Butler and his Censors,' in *Nineteenth Century*; concluded in December number.
Dec. 28. Leaves England for Biarritz and Cannes.

1896

Feb. Publishes *The Works of Bishop Butler*.
Mar. 10. Returns to England from Cannes.
,, 28. At Liverpool on the development of the English railway system.
April 'The Future Life and the Condition of Man Therein,' in *North American Review*.
Contributes an article on 'The Scriptures and Modern Criticism' to the *People's Bible*.
May *Soliloquium and Postscript* — a letter to the Archbishop of York, published.
June 'Sheridan,' in *Nineteenth Century*.

1896

June 1. Letter on Anglican Orders published.
Aug. 3. At Hawarden horticultural show on rural life.
Sept. 1. At fête in aid of Hawarden Institute on progress of music.
,, 2. At Hawarden fête on Welsh music.
,, 24. At Hengler's circus, Liverpool, on Armenian question.
Oct. 'The Massacres in Turkey,' in *Nineteenth Century*.
,, 16. At Penmaenmawr in praise of seaside resorts.

1897

Jan. 29. Leaves England for Cannes.
Mar. 19. Letter to the Duke of Westminster on the Cretan question published.

1897

Mar. 30. Returns to England from Cannes.
May 4. At Hawarden on the condition of the clergy.
June 2. Opens Victoria jubilee bridge over the Dee at Queensferry.
Aug. 2. At Hawarden horticultural show on small culture.
Nov. 26. Leaves England for Cannes.

1898

Jan. 5. 'Personal Recollections of Arthur H. Hallam,' in *Daily Telegraph*.
Feb. 18. Returns to London from Cannes.
,, 22. Goes to Bournemouth.
Mar. 22. Returns to Hawarden.
May 19. Death of Mr. Gladstone.
,, 26, 27. Lying in state in Westminster Hall.
,, 28. Burial in Westminster Abbey.

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